







S E R M O N S

PREACHED BEFORE

THE

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,

BY

HENRY EDWARD MANNING, M.A.,

ARCHDEACON OF CHICHESTER,  
AND LATE FELLOW OF MERTON COLLEGE.

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ROBERT BULLOCK MARSHAM, D.C.L.,

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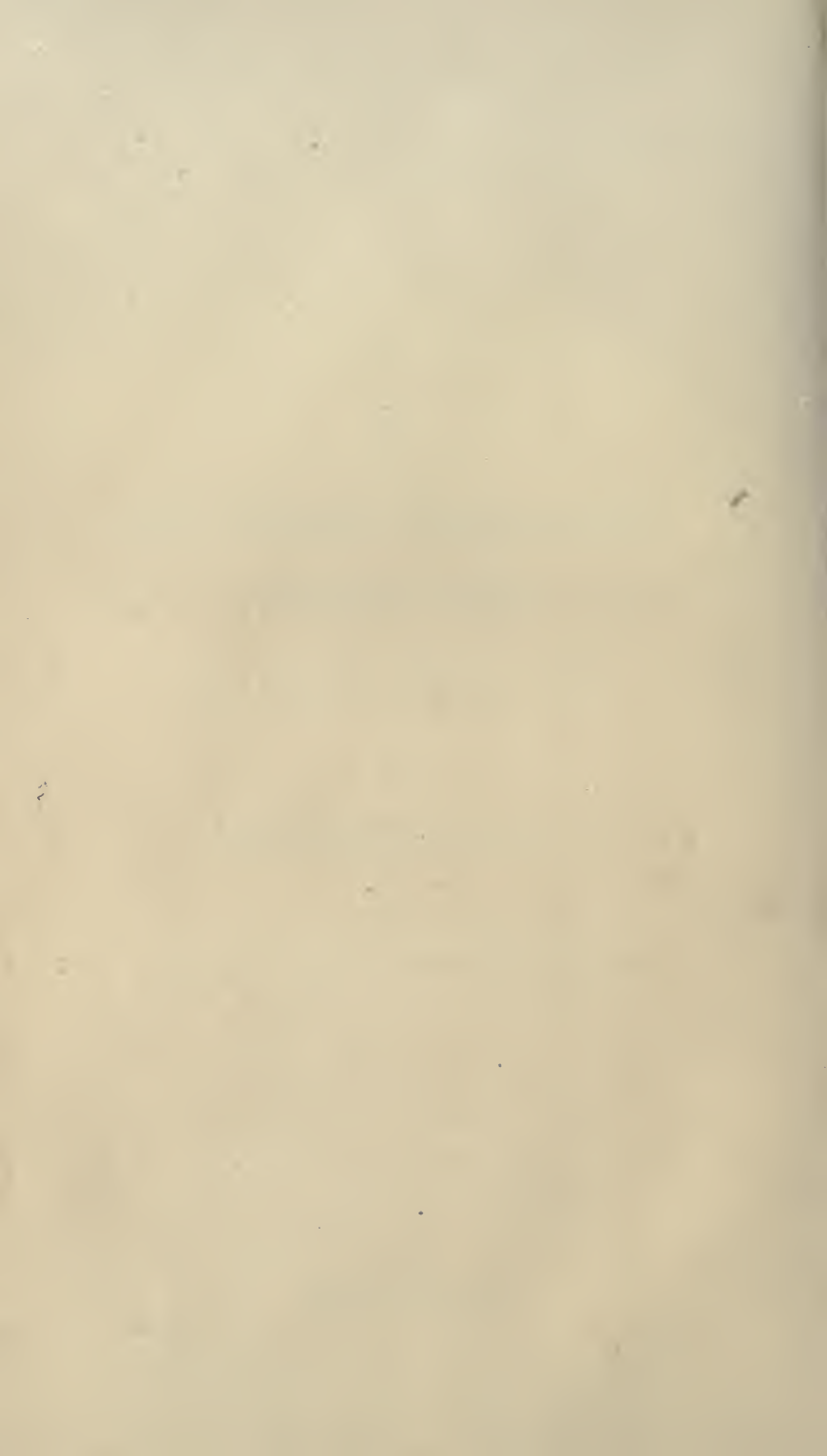
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AS

A SLIGHT ACKNOWLEDGMENT

OF

THE KINDNESSES OF MANY YEARS.



C O N T E N T S.

SERMON I.

THE DANGER OF SINNING IN THE MIDST OF  
PRIVILEGES.

*Feast of St. Matthias, 1842.*

ACTS i. 24, 25.

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Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, that he may take part of this ministry and Apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. . . . . 1

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*November 20, 1842.*

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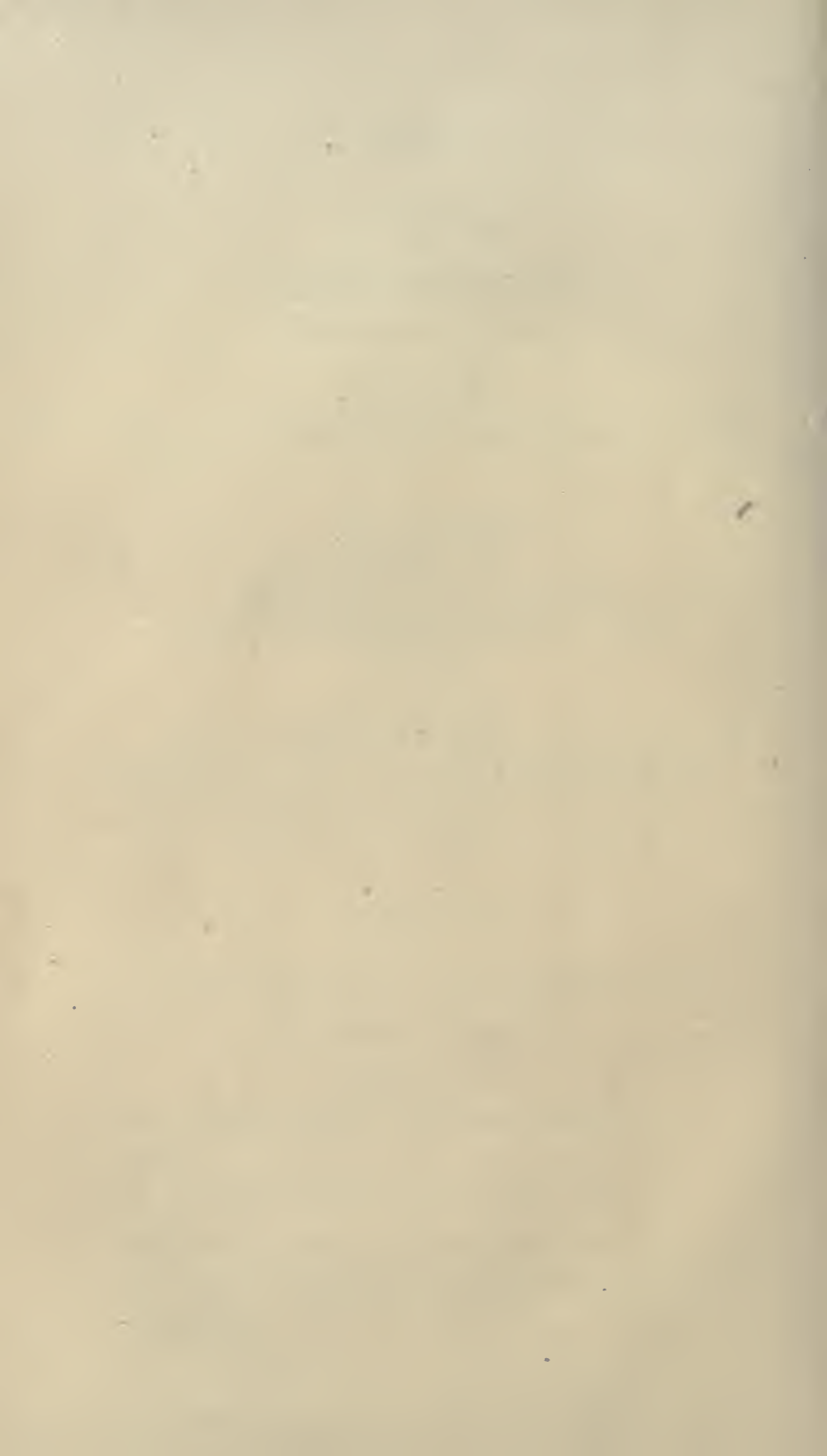
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# SERMON I.

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## THE DANGER OF SINNING IN THE MIDST OF PRIVILEGES.

Feast of St. Matthias, 1842. *24 Feb.*

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Acts i. 24, 25.

“Thou Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, that he may take part of this ministry and Apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell that he might go to his own place.”

THE Church commemorates by this festival, not more the election of St. Matthias than the fall of Judas. These two facts in the opening of the Gospel dispensation are so united, and so exhibit the two sides of one and the same great law, that they can hardly be disconnected without losing a part of the lesson designed for our learning. In Judas we see the fall, in St. Matthias the consecration, of an Apostle; the latter expressing the mind of the Spirit in the perpetuity of the Apostolical commission; the former the peril of ministering in holy things

without personal holiness. It is not more certain that by this act of the Apostles the Church of all ages is both instructed and bound to transmit, with the solemn action of prayer and imposition of hands, the divine authority, than that by the judgment which fell upon the traitor Judas a great law of God's spiritual kingdom is revealed: I mean the awful reckoning He will take with those who are familiar with the sanctities of His Church, without being thereby sanctified. And to this we may confine our present thoughts.

We are wont to treat the example of Judas as an exhibition of incredible guilt, far beyond even our own worst condition of heart. At last we come to believe it to be so remote from our common probation, as to lose the warning for which it has been recorded. In this we greatly deceive ourselves. There is less difference than we may imagine, between the probation of Judas and our own. Like the other Apostles, he was called to follow our Lord with an especial nearness. Like them he left all that he had. Like them he conversed and companied with the Lord Jesus Christ, was witness of His fasts and prayers, hungered and thirsted with Him, suffered weariness by the way-side, was buffeted on the sea; like them he shared the ghostly office of the apostleship, he partook of their mission, their preaching, their

miraculous powers ; it may be also, of their shame, and of the contradiction of sinners. So far as we know from Holy Writ, throughout the ministry of our Lord, he was like the rest. But his interior state was not like theirs. He had in his heart a master-sin still unsubdued. He was covetous : and yet, it may be, not more covetous than many both before and since his day, whose covetousness has been followed by a renouncing of all things. He was covetous : and yet Scripture is awfully silent on the mysterious question whether or no his leading sin had gained the ascendant in his heart before, or after, his call to be an Apostle : whether or no he were chosen, being from the first such as he was seen to be at last, or whether he became what he was through ordinary temptations and the insensible degrees of spiritual declension, after his call to follow Christ. That his apostacy was foreseen, St. Peter teaches us by quotation from the book of Psalms : and our Lord also when He asked, “ Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil<sup>a</sup> ? ” and again when He said, “ I know whom I have chosen : but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me<sup>b</sup>. ” But there is nothing here requiring us to believe that the inward state of Judas before and at his call was a developed state of the sin

<sup>a</sup> St. John vi. 70.

<sup>b</sup> St. John xiii. 18.

which in the end wrought his destruction. It may be that he followed the call of Christ, as Simon Magus received holy Baptism, of whom it is expressly said, that he "believed." I say it is more in harmony with the dealings of God to suppose that his was a probation like our own; that the sin of his heart though for a season held in check, still kept its hold on him, baffled the healing virtues which went out from the fellowship of Christ, and converted the daily context of his life into temptations, and the circumstances of his office into stimulants of his besetting passion. For we read of him that "he was a thief and had the bag<sup>c</sup>." And in this we see a wonderful coincidence, as it were, of the strong current of a man's sinful habit with the outward facilities which minister occasions of falling. How he became the bearer of the bag, whether by his own importunity and the predisposing turn of his character, or because his honesty was, as far as men saw, unsuspected, we know not: so it was; and in the midst of his peculiar blessings he was entrusted with an office out of which he drew excitements to his ruling though hidden fault.

And this view is borne out by what we read of his last and greatest sin: "Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the

<sup>c</sup> St. John xii. 6.



thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself<sup>d</sup>." From this it seems plain he had no thought of his Master's condemnation. He looked, it may be, at the worst for some light chastisement. He had again and again seen Him pass unharmed through the midst of His enemies, putting them aside by the majesty of His presence. He had seen the sea and the winds obey Him, and all the malice and craft of man abashed by His calm wisdom. Perhaps he thought that He who walked the water should have freed Himself from the moment of peril by the power of a miracle. At all events, he did not look for what issued from his unhallowed covenant. When he saw that He was condemned, he was all horror and amazement; and in one breath he bore witness to his Master's innocence, and to his own guilt. He dared to thwart his Lord's enemies in the moment of their first success, though he might peril his own life by that unwelcome testimony. He cast from him the bait by which he had been taken, as an accursed thing. All his greediness was subdued by the anguish of his

<sup>d</sup> St. Matt. xxvii. 3—5.

spirit, "and he departed, and went and hanged himself."

In all this we have very evident tokens of a mind not half conscious until then of its own evil. Day by day he had grown familiar with the presence and the voice of Christ, and it had lost its awfulness; day by day his own love of unlawful gains had grown more importunate, and he had lost the perception of its guilt. He had reached by slow degrees a point of hardihood, at which he did not fear to make even the person of his Master the subject of an abhorred and traitorous barter. And yet, doubtless, had he fully known what would come, he would have shrunk in terror from the thought.

Now the lesson I would draw from this example, is the extreme danger of permitting the power of any sinful affection to go unresisted: and that, first of all, because no one can foresee to what such a disposition of heart may grow. Whenssoever the mind is under the sway of any fault, such as ambition, love of money, worldliness, jealousy, self-love, all the outward circumstances of a man's life are converted into aliments of his sin. It is remarkable by what unlikely things, and by what far-fetched and unnatural ways, an ambitious or a selfish man will feed and excite his ruling passion. And by

these stimulants it perpetually gains upon the mind, and winds itself into all its movements; all things become full of it, and minister to it, and are measured by their affinity to it, and by their tendency to promote it. Little by little, and day by day, it grows, until it seems to take up all the whole character—all thoughts, reflections, forecastings, desires, in a word, the whole man—into itself. It often subdues and stifles even other faults: as ambition will overcome love of money; or rivalry a love of ease and self-indulgence. And yet it is not that a man becomes thereby less faulty; but that some one tyrannous passion grows too strong to suffer even other faults to thwart its cravings. And, nevertheless, such is the versatility of spiritual evil, that there is no fault or sin into which his master-passion may not shape itself: even as the covetousness of Judas passed into the unearthly guilt of betraying the Lord of glory. This was no more than a venture on which the spirit of greediness embarked for its own separate end. It was not an object of desire in itself; far from it: doubtless it was a thought of fear, long shrunk from, it may be, striven against, done by self-constraint at last; only less feared than the wages of betrayal were coveted. So with any predominant fault; it contains radically in itself every form of evil: for

manifold as are the kinds of sin, there is an unity in the nature of evil. The several forms are only several expressions of one principle, and it seems to matter little what may be the particular shape in which sin maintains its contact with the mind and its secret dominion over it; for any other forms of evil may be unfolded, when they appear at any time to serve the predominant desires of the heart; as for instance, selfishness often becomes cowardly, vindictive, and ungrateful; worldliness deceitful and licentious; softness effeminate and impure. Men often break out into sins altogether removed from the line of their characteristic faults; and we wonder at them, forgetting that the forms of sin are accidental, and ever changing; that they may veer about, and return into themselves, and yet always express one and the same principle of spiritual wickedness. It is therefore not only by its growth in strength and stubbornness, but by its comprehensiveness and versatility, that a ruling fault is full of peril. We are in danger of any issue, how awful soever it be, so long as we yield assent to any habitual solicitation of an unresisted sin.

Again, a sinful affection harboured in the heart casts a man out of the grace of redemption, although he be in the inner court of Christ's



Church, and in outward appearance as nigh as Judas to his Master's daily fellowship; joining perpetually in the visible order of divine worship, in fasts, festivals, and Holy Sacraments: even as Judas looked on when the water was changed to wine, and bore in his hands the bread which his Master multiplied; yet is there a bar absolute and impenetrable to the healing virtues of God's Spirit. He takes into his hands things consecrated for the life of the world; he visibly presses with his teeth the holy elements; all the harmonies of the everlasting Gospel fall upon his outer ear, and the lights of salvation enter into his speculative reason: but the heart is darkened by its own shadow. He bears within a mystery of spiritual evil, which baffles the ministries of mercy, and closes up the avenues of his will. His moral nature is in array, and in energy, against the will of God. Under the abundant grace of God he lies barren and unfruitful; and in the communion and fellowship of the Church he is cold, clouded, and alone. This, I say, is the effect of any sin harboured in the heart, such as impurity, pride, falsehood, uncharitableness, and the like; they so repel the pleadings and drawings of grace, as to make a man hold out unchanged against the transforming influences of the Spirit of God.

And well if this were all. Perilous as is a state of spiritual barrenness, and hopeless the end of cold unfruitful Christians, there is yet a greater condemnation. For mercies which are repelled turn to the savour of death unto death. To handle holy things without holiness is sacrilege. We cannot tell what wasting plague of spiritual deterioration it may work in our regenerate nature; every such approach to God is a presumption; for a sullied heart is the direct antagonist of the Divine purity. Proud and unclean thoughts are challenges of the eternal Spirit: they are energies of our being in that part of it which is akin to the divine, and are therefore in the highest order of rebellion. The will which consents to them, must be awfully estranged from God; and when with such hearts we handle His holy Sacraments, or offer up prayers and praises, professing to speak with God; unconscious of what we are, or if conscious, so much the guiltier; what do we but sin after a fearful sort? That which is ordained to life turns unto death: His gifts of grace are the very matter of our sin: His mercies are our greater condemnation.

And, besides the guilt which is thus incurred, every such contact with the outward symbols of God's presence leaves behind it a deadness upon the spiritual being. None are so hard to move as

they who have become familiar with religion, holding fast all the while some cherished sin. It may be that, for some time the consciousness of direct sins of the spirit, or of secret reserves in the heart, and of faults harboured within, will make us fear and shrink at the return of holy seasons, or sacred actions, or public solemnities, or even in our private approaches to God in secret. It is in these that the struggle is decided. Every time we call God's eye upon us by prayer, we are made to thrill at the consciousness of what we conceal within us; and either our prayers cast out the unclean spirit, or, if it go not forth, it turns and overwhelms the conscience. We are between two fears: we fear to leave off praying, and yet we fear to pray. And we go on hoping without striving, and praying without amendment; and our fears grow less, and pass into a slumber of feeling; and soon we go through the round of religious acts, without a separate consciousness of each; and they return in a cycle year by year, and day by day; and we learn to kneel without shrinking in the very presence of God: and then we grow to be unconscious of it, and self-possessed; and a dulness comes over the eye of the soul, and its ear grows heavy, and the heart waxes fat; and when most in peril we are least afraid.

It may be, that of all his covetous deeds the

last act of Judas was done with comparatively less of shrinking and irresolution. The passive feelings of awe at his Lord's presence had been worn off by daily familiarity; and the love of gain had so gathered strength as to close at once with a high and tempting bait. So must it be with us: boldness in sin, and deadness of conscience come on together, and both are deepened by the daily presence and baffled influence of slighted mercies. It often happens that the external habits of religion are maintained with as much of order as before: it is not a decline like that of coarser or more careless offenders, who, retaining a vivid sense of the awfulness of religion, even from a hatred of hypocrisy, when they consent to evil, throw off the semblance of better thoughts. Of such as these there is often more to be hoped. Profligate as they are, there is underneath a living consciousness which may be some day roused into energy by the powers of truth from which they shrink. There is something still to work on; something to appeal to: theirs is the disobedience of a heart dragged away by an evil lust, not the deadness of a drugged and hardened conscience.

And, once more, the danger of cherishing any ruling passion while we maintain the habits of religion, may be seen in this: that it is a great



provocation of the righteous severity of God. What but this has brought down on Churches and on men the awful sentence of judgment and rejection? What but this moved the righteousness of God to scatter the apostate seed of Abraham? It was no other than the guilt of permitted evil, in the midst of a consecrated order, which drew from the Lord Jesus Christ His awful threatenings to the seven Churches, and called for the sword and desolation upon the Churches of Egypt and Africa. The very same law, of which Judas is an appalling personal type, ordains the rejection of all who familiarly mingle with religion without holiness of life. We know not how God may even in this world avenge the sin of profaneness. He gave awful tokens of His consuming jealousy in the Corinthian Church, where "many were sickly and many slept." It may be, in these latter times, by His inscrutable working, He no less vindicates His unseen presence from the profanation of the presumptuous and impure. It is no disproof that we cannot assure ourselves in the particular case, as in Pharaoh, Ananias, and Herod; the same laws still reign in His kingdom, although the administration of them be more secret and unseen. We must believe it as a principle; but we shall be safer in not seeking particular examples of its infliction. Be this as it

may ; it is most certain that we do see visible marks of a righteous law appearing through the after state of those who have grown callous in the midst of God's mercies. We see them entangled in perplexities, amazed by fears, confounded by exposure, baffled in their nearest hopes, cast off even by the world. Sometimes we see men of great intellectual powers committing acts of such incredible fatuity, that we recognise the phenomena from which even a heathen could deduce a law of God's hidden government. Sometimes we see men who have long seemed fair without, and have moved along a full tide of prosperity, all at once a wreck. The evil has long tracked them unseen, and their sin has found them out at last. Sometimes we see men so seared in feeling, so abandoned to the bondage of a governing lust, and to the credulity of an unbelieving heart, that all can perceive their degradation but themselves. It is a part of their fall not to recognise their own debasement.

And how must we interpret these tokens of a righteous Judge, but as expressions of His most just award ? We read in Holy Scripture how God gives over some "to a reprobate mind ;" how He "sends strong delusion that they believe a lie ;" how He answers men "after their own heart," leaving their own fostered and multiplied

sins to develop themselves freely into the tyranny of a governing habit, so that the inner state of a man is not more his sin than his scourge.

I have now shortly touched on the peculiar danger of thus permitting the secret indulgence of any sinful affection. It is most perilous in every way: not only does it bring a man in danger of an infinite growth and multiplication of faults, but it thrusts itself in between him and the grace of life; it converts his approaches to God into profaneness; and by irreverent slighting of the very ministries of renewal, it hardens and blinds the heart. And withal it highly provokes the just severity of God, and draws down manifold visitations, and chastisements of perplexity and shame.

Fearful indeed is such a state: wherefore it is most needful to surrender ourselves to Him without reserve; to renounce sin with an entire rejection of heart; to curb ourselves with an universal strictness, giving no dispensations to any favoured fault, or to any characteristic failing; counting ourselves never safe so long as any one temper or imagination of heart exalts itself above the law of uniform obedience.

Most necessary as this admonition is to all members of Christ, to some among us it is of especial moment.

As, first, to those that share the holy office from which Judas by transgression fell. To us, above all men, does this awful warning come home with a direct and searching point : for we are favoured beyond our brethren ; we are brought nearest to the throne of our Lord. The sanctities of His Church are entrusted to our keeping. We are under a twofold vow ; both by our Baptism and by our Ordination. We have gone forth after Christ, choosing His service and fellowship for our portion. Larger measures of knowledge are a grave stewardship. But we have more. Our charge is to speak in His name, and in His name to do many mighty works ; by Sacraments, and benedictions ; by warnings, and rebukes ; by binding and loosing ; by censures and absolutions. It is but little wonder that of old men fled into the wilderness, or made as if they were of weak understanding, hiding the gifts for which others did them homage, that they might free their soul from the bond and the burden of this awful charge. They knew better, alas ! than we, what it is to minister to the Lord Jesus ; of how pure a heart, of an eye how single, of how clear and unreserved a will they must needs be, that would feed the flock of God. Well did they know that from the highest dignity in Christ's spiritual kingdom to the lowest depth in hell, there needs but one



headlong fall ; that as Satan like lightning fell from Heaven, even so may we fall from the unction of our Priesthood to the worm that dieth not. Therefore they fled, and hid themselves from that which some men now seek and court with a ready and fearful eagerness. And hence it follows that we, even when pure and without greater blame, are so often full of reserved affections, so distracted by other aims, so dazzled by the pride of life, so willing to take our fill of the high and smooth things of the world. The sacerdotal character too often seems rather the accident, than the life of our office. Happy are they who do not find themselves, even in the holiest paths, following their own personal bias, serving themselves ; and even in the most sacred actions, beset by a world of thoughts, which, because indulged at other times, thrust themselves even then unbidden on their hearts. Not only at their nearer and more formal approaches to God, but at all times are the Pastors of Christ's flock in a close relation to His unseen presence. The larger measures of spiritual knowledge entrusted to them, gives an exceeding greatness even to ordinary faults. The indulgence of such evils as vanity, bitterness, personal resentment, softness, a slanderous spirit, in the fuller light of a more instructed conscience, may make

unknown havoc in the spiritual nature. They may greatly repel the grace of sanctification, and bring on most insidious forms of declension. To take a single instance. Who can say in how great danger we may be, who live in these controversial ages of the Church; how much of unsubdued self may sullenly maintain its hold of our hearts at the very time we are making the greatest profession of His service: how we may seem to minister to Him while we indulge our own besetting faults?

Again, there are others to whom the same warning is also of great importance. I mean, to such as are favoured in a peculiar measure, and beyond their fellows, with the order and offices of the Church; to those, for example, who have leisure, and discharge from the care and turmoil of life; from its dull round of necessary business, its ambitious schemes, and vain-glorious ostentation; who live under the shadow of the Church in some sheltered dwelling, where the homage daily offered to Almighty God brings them into a perpetual nearness to the presence of the world unseen: and such are we who enjoy the untold blessings which are our inheritance in this place. By that strange and admonitory law which appears to govern all our life, we seem never to know in full the blessedness of our academic course until it is

past and over. It is after we have ventured out from its sheltering precincts, filled with a blind joy, as if released from a restraint and thralldom, we begin to know that we have forfeited a blessing. When the rough unconsecrated world throngs upon us, and wearies us by an unrelieved return of toil without sympathy, and of labour without repose; when we find ourselves carried against our will into the mid-stream of an angry and buffeting strife; then it is our hearts yearn backward for the peace of other days. In weariness and drought of soul there arises upon us the remembrance of our too short tarrying here. In the midst of a wearied and restless life, we remember the calm still thoughts of God, the daily sacrifice, the ever-renewing chant of mattins and even-song, and the quiet chimes, which here told all day long of things unseen and eternal. And it is in such moments of deep and fruitless longings for the past, that we most keenly feel the consciousness of what we were; and that our own inner state was our only hindrance. We come at last to see clearly why we reaped so little blessing from so rich a soil: because we carried our own obstructions in ourselves; our hearts were turned aside by their own permitted faults. We were still harbouring the evils of an untutored spirit. Wilfulness, vanity, softness, or self-indulgence, (for I

will not speak of the deadlier forms of profligacy,) alienated our hearts from the consecrated order of our academic life. We bore our part in it with an averted will, and a mind out of sympathy with its moral design; and we have become conscious, all too late, that we then dwelt in the neighbourhood of blessings—and that now they are hid from our eyes. We perceive at last that we were put upon a searching probation, and that we lacked faith to read the intention of our trial. Perhaps we can now discern what was the particular moral bar which we set up against its chastening discipline.

Truly much preparation of heart, much watchfulness, much government of the will, much subjugation of ourselves, much singleness of eye, is needful that we should dwell even with safety in such a place as this. Here, if any where, are the lingering admonitions of faithful days, and visible shrines which shadow the Unseen, and purities which are breathed from heaven. We cannot abide here with impunity. Better or worse we must perforce become; nearer to the mind of Christ, or further from the fellowship of God. It is an awful mercy to be greatly exalted; to be highly favoured above other men. They that followed Christ afar off, had need to walk warily; how then must they bear themselves who are



called to converse with Him in a familiar nearness ?  
 “ To whom much is given, of him shall much be  
 required.” And if with our dim insight into our-  
 selves we can detect so much of our fallen nature,  
 what must He behold, whose eyes are as a flame  
 of fire ! What sins of act, of brooding imagination,  
 of unrepenting memory, of unholy thoughts con-  
 sented in, of withheld affections, of a weak or dis-  
 loyal will ! What does not His piercing gaze  
 read in the depth of our inmost spirit ! “ Who can  
 tell how oft he offendeth ? Cleanse thou me from  
 my secret faults : keep thy servant also from pre-  
 sumptuous sins, lest they get the dominion over  
 me ; so shall I be undefiled, and innocent from  
 the great offence.”

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## SERMON II.

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### THE PROBATION OF THE CHURCH.

November 20, 1842.

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ST. MATTHEW xviii. 7.

“Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!”

IN these words our Lord both prophesied of the trials of His Church, and declared the inevitable law of its probation. Before the sight of the Son of Man all the destinies of the Church were unveiled. He foresaw the shadows and lights which should chequer its mysterious path;—the warfare of the world; the ever-returning persecutions; the winnowing of His floor; the sins of His own servants; the doctrines of devils, and apostacies of heart; the multitudes untold which in this entangled maze of trial should fall from the promises of life;—all this was full before His sight; and He said “it must needs be that offences come.”

There is something very awful in this saying. There is a severity in its abruptness: “it must needs be.” We seem to be brought into the pre-

sence of one of the great laws of the spiritual world, and to see as it were one of the mysteries of sin laid open. It means plainly this: To the end of time men will go on sinning, and causing others to sin; falling, and making others to fall; perishing, and destroying those "for whom Christ died."

And so it must be: First, because this world is fallen, and evil is still mingled with the creatures of God; it is still a living and energetic principle in the nature of man; the bias is yet upon him: and next, because it is the moral character, so to speak, of God's providential government over the world, not to *coerce* the actings of man's will. The restoration of the regenerate to the image of God, is not wrought out by a mechanical expulsion of evil from the world; nor by reducing the moral nature of man, created in the likeness of God, to a passive and involuntary being; but by sustaining the powers of man against the strength and solicitations of the evil one: by imposing such checks and limitations on the workings of sin, as shall bring it under the powers of a regenerate will. In all the complex agencies which make up the probation of men, there is an ultimate point, where each living responsible being stands or falls, in and by his own personal act.

Therefore it must needs be that many should fail



in this great probation : that all along the course of the Church through this ensnaring world, multitudes should fall away before the powers of evil, and strive against the pleadings and the guidance of the Spirit of God ; becoming thereby each one a several principle of evil ; a temptation, and a stumbling-block to other men. And of these offences there are many forms. Sometimes they have come in shapes of unmasked evil ; by persecution for Christ's sake ; or by blasphemy, infidelity, uncleanness, hatred, pride, schisms, heresies, and the like : sometimes under a veil, and in concealment, in the indirect effects of the lives of selfish and uncharitable Christians, who follow without check the current of a headstrong will, pleasing themselves, and careless of other men. Both ways such men become propagators of evil ; their living powers are either openly arrayed on the side of the kingdom of darkness, or they hold treacherous commerce with it ; from age to age they repeat portions of the original Fall, by involving in the consequence of acts, charged with evil, generations as yet unborn. Such, for instance, was Simon Magus ; and the author of the Nicolaitan heresy ; the Judaizing teachers ; Montanus, Arius, Donatus, and the like, whose names are remembered in the Church of God as Jero-boam of old, " who made Israel to sin." These men sinned and died, but not alone. Their work in the

world was in direct contravention of the work of Christ. He knit the world together in unity; they divided His mystical Body. He lifted up the light of truth upon the earth; they set up a cheat and a counterfeit. He impressed on man a law of purity; they tainted the sanctities of life, and taught men so. He made plain the one path to life eternal; they bewildered it with a maze of windings and perplexity. He reared in the world a visible Church, which by its unity and sanctity should guide men to heaven; they bequeathed to Christendom a family of sects and doctrines, which should run down from age to age, shifting, it may be, in outward shape, but inwardly ever the same, ensnaring and offending His followers: so that as He is by an incommunicable title the Saviour, they are the destroyers, of mankind.

I. There are some inferences naturally flowing from what has been said: as, for instance, it is plain that what seem to us to be obstructions of the Divine purpose in His Church, are nevertheless foreseen and subservient to His design. *How* it may be, we shall never know till all be fulfilled, till we look back upon the course of this world, and see its secret unravelled by after events, and the great mystery resolved by the perfection of God's elect.

We are apt to speak of the Church as if the ori-

ginal scheme of the Divine mind were to realize, at this present time, something very different from what we now see ; as if it were designed to exhibit, in this present world, a state of holiness and of unity, far beyond what we anywhere find to exist : as if God, in the beginning, had laid the ground-plan of a perfect work, and men had marred it in the superstructure. But is it not nearer to the truth to believe that it was designed to be what indeed it is ; that the Divine monarchy over the world is really expressed in all things, even as they are ; that there is some deeper reason in the fact that they are not otherwise ; that all the offences, scandals, and falls of Christian men and of Churches were all foreseen, and, so to speak, reckoned into and allowed for in the great scheme ; so that the purpose of God is fulfilling, not only in spite but by means of the most adverse powers ?

We perhaps should have expected in the Church an unbroken unity, an uncontaminated faith, and an increasing sanctity of life. And yet we find the phenomena of its history to be in direct variance with such anticipations. It was no sooner founded, than there were some who were not of it, who went out from it. The Catholic faith is hardly older than the Gnostic heresy. It may be, on the hypothesis of good and evil co-existing

in the Church, and of a moral, not a mechanical restoration of our nature to God, that schism and heresy are the foils and conditions of the manifestation of unity and truth; as St. Paul has said, “there must be heresies among you, (*δεῖ γὰρ καὶ αἱρέσεις ἐν ὑμῖν εἶναι*) that they which are approved may be made manifest among you<sup>a</sup>.”

So far from seeing the world conformed to a perfect moral rule, by the powers of regeneration which are in the Church, we find rather the Church itself, in many ways, as it were succumbing to the temper of the world. The standard of Christian life, which was set up in the lives of Apostles, Martyrs, and Saints, seems visibly fallen, partly through decay of discipline, and partly through the declension of these latter days. It would almost tempt us to imagine that the momentum of the Gospel were a measured force, exhausting itself as it advances. And yet this declension was foretold from the first: “When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth<sup>b</sup>?” “Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold<sup>c</sup>.” At the time of the Church’s history when we might perhaps be looking (as some do look) for a mature and universal kingdom of the Gospel, “the Spirit speaketh expressly, that some shall depart from the faith,

<sup>a</sup> 1 Cor. xi. 19. <sup>b</sup> St. Luke xviii. 8. <sup>c</sup> St. Matt. xxiv. 12.



giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron<sup>d</sup>." Though this may have its incipient fulfilment in early days, it still characterizes these, which are called "perilous times<sup>e</sup>:" and we know that the forerunner of Christ's coming shall be a falling away, such as never was from the beginning, and, it may be, as the first ages believed, some personal revelation of the wicked one, "the son of perdition." From all this it seems plain that it is no more a part of the Divine purpose to exhibit the Church perfect in its qualities, than fulfilled in its number, before "the manifestation of the sons of God;" so that, as the faithful are gathered out one by one, and the Church is imperfect till the number is accomplished, in like manner the Church on earth must needs be, as its members are, subject to the conditions of mortality, abased by the imperfections of the Fall. And this seems to be the form under which the purpose of the Divine mind is fulfilling itself. In a world wherein sin and death have gained an entrance, scandals and offences, it may be, are related to the perfecting of the Church, as the entering of sin into the world is related to the Divine mercy and glory. It is the condition under which God has been pleased to reveal Himself to the world in our redemption. And out of this disordered and

<sup>d</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 1, 2.

<sup>e</sup> 2 Tim. iii. 1.

conflicting state, there is ever being gathered a perfect fruit, there is ever passing off a perfect result; out of the offending multitude, an approved handful,—out of many called, few chosen. It is a wonderful and inscrutable secret of the Divine government, to which the waste of nature, and the extinction of animal life, as soon as given, are but faint analogies. We can measure, after some sort, the direct tendency of truth and goodness to certain proximate ends; but the complex result of the composition of the great moral forces of truth and falsehood, good and ill, is beyond all finite understanding. Some wonderful function in God's spiritual kingdom has been fulfilled by the very antagonism of sin and falsehood. Schismatics, heresiarchs, apostates, and every offender of Christ's little ones, has somehow obeyed the will he has resisted: as prominent angles reflecting the light they intercept. It may be, that the saints must needs be winnowed by evil; and that the seemingly self-obstructing, contradicting, turbulent phenomenon which we call Christendom, is the necessary means, under the conditions of the Fall, to prepare for that day when "the Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity:" and "the righteous shall

shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”

2. Another inference we may draw is this : that whatsoever, as a general law, is subservient to the purpose of the Divine mind towards the Church, must be, at all times, most expedient for it. This may seem harder to believe in particular instances. It is a paradox to say, that the divisions of the Church, the East against the West, the North against the South ; and the multitude of open heresies, and the infinite multiplication of unbridled and insidious errors ; the fastidious laxity of these later days ; the excited intellectual state of modern civilization ; the worship of expediency ; the pride of political freedom ; the refinements of self-indulgence ; the stagnation of spiritual powers ; the over-development of private theories, and of individual peculiarities of opinion and practice ; it seems incredible, I say, at first sight to affirm that all these are conspiring together for the furtherance of the Divine purpose in the Church. And for this reason : because the purpose we are wont to assume to be the design of God, is not His purpose, but our own. We are looking for an absolute manifestation of perfection ; He for a perfection which shall be accomplished through the laws of our probation. And yet “it must needs be that offences come,” is

not a more unerring and absolute law, than “all things work together for good to them that love God.” We can acknowledge them severally and apart, but we cannot combine them in one view.

To take a particular case: I mean the state of the Church of Christ among us. The land seems full of offences; they lie within the precinct of the Church; offences seem to multiply day by day; old stumbling-blocks are not taken out of the way, new are cast down: there must needs be heresies among us, and heresies there are: throughout the land there is the voice as of a great multitude but speaking diverse things: discipline is relaxed; the Church year by year deplures it; her national character seems fading away: rival Churches, Priesthoods, Doctrines, and Sacraments, challenge her legitimacy. Of her own some forsake her: the habit of faith in realities external to the mind is weak and languid: the moral character of division is fully out upon our people: it is sustained in its intensity among the sects which beset the Church; it finds too ready a sympathy even within its pale. They that bear us no good-will would say more: and they that dwell over-much on the visible face rather than the hidden purpose of our trials, are tempted to believe them. But so “it must needs be”: from the beginning it hath been so; it is,



and ever shall be. "There hath no temptation taken" us, "but such as is common to" the Church. They who complain, or are cast down at these things, do they not unconsciously repine at the discipline by which the Church is to be perfected, and impeach the wisdom of Christ's providential rule? Even though it be all that I have said; though it be manifold worse, as indeed it may be; and perhaps it will: let all the offences, which are even now so many, be both more and greater,—"it must needs be." There is some greater destiny before us for which we are not yet ripe. It may be that there is in store for this Church some rougher work than to dress her own vineyard; some higher lot than to open and shut the fold of one people. It is doubtless expedient that we should be tempted, humbled, and chastised; that we should learn deeper lessons in warfare with the gates of hell; that we may realize, and identify with our very life, our mystical union with Christ through this branch of His Church Catholic, and become conscious of the great gift of His presence among us; and offer ourselves up to Him through it, to be trained and strengthened in obedience to the mother of our regeneration. It may be, that these offences are permitted, in order to work out our steadfastness, to turn our passive abiding in the Church into a

conscious and energetic principle of loyalty. It is just in this point that we are tried, and it is there we most need a trial.

The bearing of what has been said upon our own probation is very obvious. First, in teaching us to realize the greatness of our personal responsibility; "Woe to that man by whom the offence cometh. It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea<sup>f</sup>." Be we what and where we may, there is a great context of God's providence all round about us, which we dare not rend. That we are both where we are, and what we are, is a revelation of His purpose to us, and in that lot we must stand: our probation is here. Who can say whether He will accept us on probation in any other path? We may not lay the scene of it elsewhere; we cannot merge our responsibility in the probation of others, nor of the Church; we must die and be judged alone; "we must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body<sup>g</sup>."

Let us therefore remember how pregnant with unknown consequences is every single act and word;—there is something in each that passes into eternity, and has a power greater and more penetrating than we can ever know till all shall be

<sup>f</sup> St. Matt. xviii. 6.

<sup>g</sup> 2 Cor. v. 10.

fulfilled. In our lifetime we can see only the least portion of their effects ; “ some men’s sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment, and some men they follow after<sup>h</sup>.” It is after men are dead that their works begin to be known. For instance, how little did the authors of heresy and schism foresee, that it would one day come to pass, that all truth should, by their act, be overcast with distorting shadows, and even the unity and visibleness of the Church be plausibly denied ! How little did the age in which they lived know of what we see ! They saw only the casting of the evil seed ; we the bitter and accumulated harvest. Or again : Take impure or infidel writers, such as have blighted the literature of England and France in the last hundred and fifty years : what unknown worlds of lust and of unbelief, ever multiplying, generation after generation, what rendings of the body of Christ, what revilement of holy things, have teemed from the span of their miserable life ! what multitudes for whom Christ died have perished by the offence of one long since gone to his account ! While he suffers in the world unseen, he sins still on earth. He is a partaker of other men’s sins, and has a twofold being ; ever suffering, and ever sinning : age by age burdening him with a heavier condemnation, multiplying the woe in which he is tormented. “ It had been

<sup>h</sup> 1 Tim. v. 24.

better for that man if he had never been born." Alas for us, then, if we through ignorance which is not guiltless, in our short day on earth, shall put "light for darkness, and darkness for light;" if we teach false things for true, or reject true as false; or make doubtful things necessary, or treat necessary things as doubtful; or destroy men's fears of heresy, or teach them to make light of schism, or give occasion to either; yea, if we "break one of the least of" God's "commandments, and teach men so."

Who can foretell what shall be said of us, when this our busy day is over? We are always affecting other men with a power which, could we fully know it, would make us tremble. Our thoughtless actions, random words, unguarded hints, our very tones, even our gestures, in our most relaxed hours, leave impressions on other men, such as we neither design nor imagine. We may learn it in ourselves. Who is there but can trace back thoughts, wishes, imaginations, habits, or even the bias of a whole life, to some act or word of another? It may be, they were unconscious at the time, and to this hour have never known the powerful impulse they gave to our destinies. Perhaps some of our strongest inclinations are derived from a word we heard in childhood, or an event that met us on the threshold of life in a season of trial; or



of secret excitement, when the vividness of the mind makes it take deep impressions from trivial causes ; or at a moment when our character was balancing in suspense, and doubtfully inclining towards its after determination. And how slight a cause is sufficient for the worst result. The injection of a solitary doubt has issued in settled infidelity ; an impure tale has wrought itself out into the defilements of an unchaste life ; an irreverent quotation of Holy Writ has possessed a man's mind with haunting thoughts nearly akin to blasphemy ; a light mention of sin has made men bold to do, what before they hardly dared to think ; a slighting comment on devoted men, or on high purposes of self-denial, has slackened energies and checked aspirations, which might have won a great reward. These, and the like offences, are ever passing off, so to speak, from the life and the lips of sinful and inconsiderate men. *Lapides sunt in viâ*—stones of stumbling ; tempters of the brethren ; destroyers of “ those for whom Christ died.” It will be a fearful retrospect for the man that must look back on some companion of his boy-  
hood, some early friend, some brother in Christ, over whom he has wielded an evil influence. He will remember, it may be, when his friend was pure, and himself over-familiar with sin : he remembers, perhaps, the place, and the day, and the hour of the

day, and who was by, and what he did, and that he was neither ignorant nor taken unawares, but sinned in the clear light and with a resolved heart ; and that through him another fell, and has never arisen again : though he, the tempter, be now penitent, the tempted is still unchanged. A single word was enough to corrupt, but whole years of entreaty and of tears have not prevailed to reclaim the fallen. Awful retrospect in this life ! and what shall it be in that state where is only the “ fearful looking for of fiery indignation ? ” and what in the abode “ where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched ? ”

2. In the next place, this view of the subject may teach us the danger of suffering to exist in us the inward habits which lead to offences ; such, I mean, as self-dependance, irreverence, disobedience to the authority immediately set over us ; discontent at the lot, and impatience at the probation, which God has appointed for us. And also others less noted and watched against ; such as a private spirit in judging and acting, which, in matters of defined obligation, is, ethically, disobedience to the Church and to Christ ; self-contemplation, in which we forget others ; self-pleasing, by which we endanger others ; a false conscience, which makes what we wish appear to be our duty ; a tongue which utters crude opinions, and precipitate objec-

tions ; prejudices, which alienate men by habitual misunderstandings ; a skilfulness in making worse constructions of other men's acts seem like truth ; hard censures of states of character in which we do not sympathize ; unfeeling disregard of trials from which we happily are free ; a fancied zeal for truth, which marks a censorious or a controversial spirit. We are both so unwary and, even when most guarded, so transparent, that we cannot harbour these spots in our hearts without betraying them to the hurt of others. However careful we may be, the faults of our minds will breathe out, so long as they go unchastened. There is no safety for us, but in correcting them at the very core.

3. And lastly, we may learn that there is no way of correcting them but by the expulsive power of habits with which they cannot co-exist. There is nothing that will perfectly discharge us of the self-will by which offences come, except a habit of uniform obedience. Nothing will so refrain us from words or acts out of harmony with the Divine will, and misleading to other men, as obedience to a superior ; to us, this superior is the Church, in which we were born again. We shall never be disinfected of the spirit of self-pleasing and inconsiderateness, except we be endowed with larger gifts of charity. “ *Fratres, inter hæc scandala unum est remedium. Ne malè sentias de fra-*



*tre tuo. Humiliter esto quod vis eum esse, et non putabis eum esse quod non es*<sup>1</sup>." There is a blessed simplicity in charity, which covereth all things, and hopeth all things. Its very blindness to a brother's faults gives to its touch so delicate a keenness, as to detect the faintest traces of excuse, and the lightest shadow of a good intention. It has a happy credulity in believing men better than they are, and by believing to make them so. It has a manifold cunning in combining favourable improbabilities, and devising for erring brethren fairer interpretations than they could imagine for themselves. Obedience and charity; these two are our safeguard in an age of scandal: they are the divine antagonist to that spirit by which offences come, for they are the Spirit of Christ. "Let us not judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall, in his brother's way." Yea, let us love unity, and desire each other's steadfastness; and we shall "follow after the things which make for peace, and things whereby one may edify another."

The probation of every one of us is drawn to so fine a texture, that we may well be fearful over ourselves. So perhaps every age has said before; each one thinking its own trials greater than were ever known since the beginning. We may be

<sup>1</sup> St. Augustin.

only as our forefathers : nay, in the instant pressure of hard choices and great perplexities, it may be, they were far more tried than we. And yet we seem to be at a point which is full of long-drawn consequences for the hereafter. Offences abound, yea, and are multiplied, and tokens of offences yet to come hang upon the horizon, and we know not what may be ascending below it. Day by day new shadows rise out of quarters which before were fair : new agencies and powers which were for a time held back, seem like the stayed winds of heaven, to be coming down upon the Church. Past ages have bequeathed their offences to us ; we have added our own. It may be, that these latter times shall grow more and more perilous till the end come, when, “except those days be shortened, there should no flesh be saved.” The refiner’s fire seems to be fanned to a piercing heat ; and He is setting us nearer and nearer within its range. It may be that the Prophet’s words must needs be fulfilled, in our days. “Some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge them, and to make them white, even to the time of the end<sup>k</sup> ;” and “Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried ; but the wicked shall do wickedly : and none of the wicked shall understand ; but the wise shall understand<sup>l</sup>.”

<sup>k</sup> Dan. xi. 35.

Ibid. xii. 10.

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# SERMON III.

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THE WORK APPOINTED US.

March 12, 1843.

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ST. JOHN xviii. 37.

“To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world.”

IN these words of our Lord to Pilate there is something peculiarly awful. There was surely never any one who bore less the outward semblance of a king, than the Son of Man at that hour. He stood in the judgment-hall, in the midst of the powers of this world, forsaken and desolate, broken with sorrows, watching, and agony, a very spectacle of weakness and humiliation. Yet never did the assertion of a kingly title carry its own attestation with a more commanding majesty. When to our eyes He might seem most baffled and powerless, He was fulfilling, with the most perfect accomplishment, the mysterious design of His Kingdom. “My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from

hence. Pilate therefore said unto him : Art thou a King then ? Jesus answered, thou sayest that I am a King. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.”

Our Lord here declares that there was one great design for the fulfilment of which He assumed our nature, and became a sojourner and an out-cast in His own world: for that one end and purpose He took our manhood, was born, was subject to His parents, was baptized of John’s baptism, taught, suffered, and died. It is this, if we may reverently speak it, which gives such a perfect unity to the history of His life. A consciousness of this one end and cause of His coming, was always upon Him ; it wrought upon Him as the perfect law which controlled His whole being. Even in childhood it began to manifest itself. “How is it that ye sought me : wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business <sup>a</sup> ?” And afterwards, “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work <sup>b</sup>.” So altogether, we are told, did it carry Him out of the common life of men, that His friends “went out to lay hands on him, for they said, He is beside himself <sup>c</sup>.”

This declaration of our Lord naturally suggests the question, Whether are we severally born into

<sup>a</sup> St. Luke ii. 49. <sup>b</sup> St. John vi. 34. <sup>c</sup> St. Mark iii. 21.



the world, in any sense or measure for the fulfilment of an end foreseen and fore-determined, in the providential order of God's kingdom ; or was this a part of the supernatural dispensation, of which He was the object and centre ? Does this belong to Him in that aspect, so to speak, of His life, which is so remote as hardly to afford example to us ? I mean as a divine Person, the subject of prophecy—the only Mediator and Propitiation for the sins of the world. Or may we believe that, in thus declaring that there was a certain and fore-determined end which He came to fulfil, He did but declare, in the highest and most perfect form, the law which orders and disposes of us all ; that in this, though His work on earth was inseparable from His Divine nature, He is an example to us ? Although it is manifest that in one sense we cannot be " pure as He is pure," nevertheless in that very point He is set before us as an example : so it may be, that in the truth of His humanity He is proposed to us as an example of the particular appointments of God, and of the entire self-dedication with which we ought to obey them. Is there, then, reason to believe that we are sent into the world for any designed end, and can we arrive at such a knowledge of the particular will of God towards us in this point, as to admit of our saying in a lowered and secondary, but true sense, " To

this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world?"

It would appear that we may: it would seem also to be of the highest practical influence that we should take this view of our lot and probation in life.

1. A particular appointment, ordering the life of individual men, appears to be inseparable from the idea of God's providential government over the world. As that government is carried on upon a perfect general scheme, so it must necessarily involve an ordering and disposal of particular agents. Of this, the history of the Old Testament is a direct proof throughout. For what is it but the key to the providence of God in the world, and an account of the Divine government, written under the guidance of the Divine Governor? In that history we see how God not only disposes of nations, but orders the path of every several man; not only in institutions, such as the Church and Polity of Israel; not only in the succession of priests and kings, and in the extraordinary calling of prophets; but in the selection of individual agents, as Joseph, Saul, David, Jeroboam, Cyrus, Zacharius, Simeon, and others.

This, taken alone, would be enough to interpret to us the dispensation under which we are living. But we have a still clearer light. Our Lord Him-

self has declared to us that “the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods: and unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; *to every man according to his several ability*<sup>d</sup>.” “For the Son of Man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and *to every man his work*<sup>e</sup>.” And as the kingdom of heaven, like a net let down into the sea and taking of all kinds, incloses nations and families within its folds; it follows, that every member of that kingdom, whether called to spiritual or secular offices, or to the retired duties of a domestic life, is truly charged with a trust and a work, which is to him the end for which he lives; or—as we are wont to say, unconsciously recognising the great law of God’s kingdom—his vocation and his calling.

2. It seems also necessarily to follow, that, if this be so, and if our probation lies, as our Lord’s parables teach us, in the particular trust or calling we have received, we must needs be able to discern what is our particular vocation; to what end in life the will of God is disposing us. If our duty lie in that direction, and if our probation be in following the guidance of God by the particular path of our duty, it must be so; there must be

<sup>d</sup> St. Matt. xxv. 14, 15.

<sup>e</sup> St. Mark xiii. 34.

some sufficient indications to those who diligently seek them, whereby they may assure themselves that they are fulfilling, in God's kingdom, the work which He designs them to accomplish. Although we shall perhaps never fully know, until all things are revealed, what is the end to which our whole being on earth has been subordinated and overruled, yet it is most certain that such a design exists in the manifold wisdom of God ; that there is an end and cause for which we are what we are.

In a subject of so great extent, and descending, as it necessarily must, into details so minute, and of a kind so personal and various, it is obviously impossible to lay down any rules which shall be sufficient to guide all men in weighing and deciding on, these indications of God's particular providence to them. All I can attempt to do is to suggest some particular instances in explanation of what has been said.

We may be sure then that we are ordained by the Divine will to that calling in the world, which shall most certainly promote our sanctification, and the attainment of everlasting life ; and moreover to that which shall most directly lead to the enlargement and edification of His Church, and to the salvation of those for whom Christ died. So much is true generally, and of all men.

But, in particular, we may most strongly pre-



sume the state in which we actually find ourselves to be the calling wherewith we are called ; or that to which our state naturally leads ; or that which is nearest to it ; which needs least effort, or transition to attain it. Sometimes a man is so visibly sought out by persons or events, which, as it were, embody and represent the providence of God to him, that he cannot doubt that it is God who is calling him. The initiative is visibly in God's hands : and he does but follow. Sometimes the choice is made for us by the act of others ; and our will is forestalled, and moulded by early circumstances ; sometimes a man's own natural powers mark out his work for him ; sometimes his attainments ; sometimes the strange facilities which open, and invite him into one path rather than any other ; sometimes the difficulties which spring up on every side, as a man turns himself, till he has set his face in one direction ; sometimes predominant and unaccountable longings of the mind ; or strong convictions of duty overruling wishes for some path more flattering and gratifying to a man's hopes and aspirations ; or again, the exigencies of the days in which he lives, or unexpected junctures of events, and the like ; all these, and many more tokens which are hid in the secret economy of God's particular providence, do wonderfully reveal to us at times the will of



God,—as if He were guiding us with His eye : and we seem to understand by a sort of intuition clearer than all reasoning, or rather by faith, which is stronger and more persuasive even than such intuitions, that this or that particular calling is the line that God wills us to follow, and therefore the end for which we are henceforth to live.

In this sense, then, it seems we may conclude that in the life of our Lord we have an example of the most perfect human obedience, guided and quickened by an unintermitted consciousness that He was fulfilling the work for which He came into the world ; and that such is the law of His Kingdom, beginning from its Divine head, and running down through every member to the lowest ; that the most perfect obedience of regenerate men, is to follow with entire faith and obedience the leading of God, as it is revealed to them in their particular calling ; and that this probation lies in faithfully seeking for the tokens of God's guidance, especially in the choice of their profession or vocation in life.

I would now set aside the higher aspect of this question ; I mean, the religious obligation of studying and following the leadings of God's providence, and of the rewards which are promised to such as faithfully obey the intimations of His will, and rather consider it in its relation to our

practice, and in its bearings upon our choice of a particular course in life.

It may be said almost in one word, that the crisis and turning point of our probation lies in deliberately choosing, and following out, some one aim, as the end to which God has called us. About men who have so chosen their path, there is an unity of purpose, a singleness of heart, a concentration of all moral and intellectual powers, an intensity of decision, an energy in counsel and action, a superiority both to opposition and to allurements, which at once bespeaks a strength greater than their own. Sometimes, and in some measure, this may be traced to the native powers of the character: but almost always it will be found to result from the steadiness, and determination, and consequent enlargement of the natural powers, resulting from the fixedness and distinctness of their aim and purpose. Even men of the commonest natural powers, by the force of a choice well made, often accomplish the greatest works. What they have not in intellectual gifts, is compensated for in the moral habit. It is wonderful to see for how many high mental endowments, mere decision and calm perseverance will make up. Whatsoever powers such men possess, are united, and therefore concentrated and multiplied. It sometimes seems as if the human will alone, (when in har-

mony with God's will,) could do any thing ; as if it could put forth out of its own depths all manner of endowments. Even those which are not, either by nature or by acquirement, in the character, seem to wait upon a man who lives not to do his own will, but the will of Him that sent him. And it is not for us to say how such men may be gifted for the work to which they are called. We have the Apostles for an example, and multitudes in after-times of the Church, unlettered men, and weak women, for continual proofs that with those who are in their lot in God's kingdom, there is One who worketh in them to "will and to do of His good pleasure." It seems the very law of God's dealings to choose "the weak things of the world to confound the mighty;" to make "perfect His strength in weakness;" and it is remarkable how many who have done the greatest work in edifying and instructing the Church, and have left upon it the deepest and most lasting impression of their characters, have been noted in early as in private life for slowness of understanding, smallness of natural gifts, or positive imperfections. Oftentimes they have been, as we say, the last men we should have chosen: but David was chosen last of all. Their greatness lay hid in their moral powers, which, when fully ripe, asserted a supremacy over the mere endowments of the mind, and exerted

an irresistible force. When once they had found their line, so to speak, in God's kingdom in that direction, they carried all before them: nothing seemed able to withstand their advance. As occasions arose, they put forth new faculties to meet them: as difficulties multiplied, so did their powers. They seemed able to cope with any thing, and to subdue every thing to themselves.

If there be any intelligible cause to be assigned for such facts, any, I mean, subject to our understanding and to our control; it is simply this: such men had chosen one aim in life, believing that it was God who called them to it; they set up that one object before them, and, in one word, they lived for it. They loved life as the condition of that which they loved better than life itself; to them "to live" was "Christ." They did not doubt or fear to say, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world."

The importance of this subject will be brought out still more strongly by a contrast. We shall find almost universally that they who neglect or violate this great law of obedience to the providential government of God, either live at random, wasting their powers and life without point or aim, or take some self-willed and dangerous course.

We often see men of high intellectual gifts,



with much cultivation of mind, and many attainments, pass through life, and do absolutely nothing. Men of whom the greatest expectations have been formed, often seem to grow less and less mature as they grow older. Again, there are some who can do all things, but do nothing well ; who know something of all subjects, but know none thoroughly ; have a multitude of aims, but reach none ; and a multitude of undertakings, but fulfil nothing. This is true of all they touch ; their studies, devotions, rules of self-discipline, schemes of benevolence, and the like. They propose to themselves to live for so many objects, that they end in living for none at all. There is no one aim to which all other things are made to bend, and therefore their whole life is without point or meaning.

The cause of this is either a want of faith simply to obey God with earnestness in the lot where they are originally placed, or a want of moral force to strengthen the will against the solicitations of vanity, ambition, self-indulgence, and the like. They cannot withstand present popularity, and they squander themselves to purchase a momentary reputation ; or they cannot resist the temptation to be thought liberal, or accomplished, or refined, or versatile and comprehensive in their powers and attainments ; or



they cannot brace themselves steadily to pursue some one aim at the cost of self-denial, worldly discouragement, loss of ease, and the brighter scenes of life; or to forego excitement, and visions of remote enterprizes, and to settle themselves patiently to some laborious and commonplace line of duty. And therefore it follows that their whole life passes away as if they had come into this world for no end or purpose. They die and leave behind them nothing.

Or, what is worse, they deliberately, though unconsciously, choose a wrong line. Through some warp or fault of the mind, they commit themselves to callings and professions out of which, after the loss of years beyond all price, disappointment and failure drive them at last to retrace their steps. A false choice often costs a man half his life. No greatness of intellectual powers, no scholastic attainments, no worldly advantages, will compensate for a rash step at the outset. Even those that best recover themselves, are not what they would have been. Many never recover themselves at all; one false choice leads to another: when they attempt to begin over again, they cannot find the place from which they set out; they have lost the point of sight. They pass from one wrong path to another, and a succession of changes is generally a succession of mistakes.

But the worst case of all is where a man, under the dominion of some characteristic fault, such as ambition, or love of power, pleasure, or gain, either deliberately enters upon paths to which God not only does not invite him, but even forbids him to approach; or having entered them, through error at first, afterwards wilfully perseveres. History is full of such instances. Our everyday life presents many an example; and what sight can be more pitiable than that of a man striving to gain or to keep a position in God's world, to which God has not invited him? What repulses and disappointments, what falls and humiliations, do men earn for themselves by struggling for places and functions in God's kingdom which He has not allotted to them. "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth<sup>f</sup>." What can a man gain by refusing the place which the Lord of the kingdom assigns him, and by thrusting himself upon unbidden services? What but failure, and bitterness, and overthrow? "They shall build, but I will throw down." All their excitement, and toil, and busy fretfulness, and all their great and high sounding schemes come, in the end, to nothing: nay, sometimes to worse: they end in the decline of personal integrity; in the deterioration of the man; they form in him the

<sup>f</sup> Isaiah xlv. 9.

habits of restlessness, repining, and disobedience, and train him to crave after things denied to him, to murmur at the providence of God, and to put himself in opposition to the government of the Divine will.

And this is not only true of men who go wrong on a large scale, such as the prominent characters in the history of nations, whose parts are laid in the turbulent times of the world: it may be our own case: for every state of life is ordered by the same divine Governor. Even our unmarked and homely life may be the scene of as direct a variance of our will with the will of God, as the life of Pharaoh or of Saul.

We see tokens of this conflict running through a man's whole career. It is the reason of every failure, and the secret of every disappointment. Sometimes even apparent success will prove all the more visibly that a man is at variance with the order of Providence. Sometimes men prosper as they grow worse, and grow worse as they grow more prosperous. And the place of their ambition, the post they have longed for, is reserved for the more conspicuous chastisement of their original perversity. Their very success turns to an exposure, and a retribution.

Let what has been said suffice to shew the great practical importance of this subject. Our

lives are chiefly determined for good or ill by the first choice we make upon the very threshold: and our choice will be wise, and safe, just in the measure in which we repress the importunate solicitations of our own minds, and follow in faith what seems to us to be the leading of God's providential hand.

With many of us this act of choice is past. For good or ill it is over: to some of us it is irrevocable—I mean, to us who have received Holy Orders. We cannot choose again; but we may learn much from what I have endeavoured to express. We may learn to look more fixedly, year by year, on the one aim of our life; to cast off unnecessary burdens; to draw ourselves within straiter lines, and to live more singly, and with fuller dedication of all we have and all we are, to the service of the Church.

But I had rather speak to those who have this one great choice still to make.

Brethren, you are come to the point where your life must soon take its determination for ever. Hitherto you have been walking in a vain show; a little while, and your life will be turned to a reality. A change will soon have passed on you, which you have not imagination now to conceive. Your present life will seem to you to be a very dream, a playing at life rather than living.



For some of you the choice of your future path (though not actually made) is already predisposed. Hereditary place, the burdensome stewardship of this world's wealth, bonds and ties of blood, the wise authority of parents, have already determined for you the position and career in which you shall glorify God. Be that position, be that career what it may be, there is one governing law, which must alike control you and the most consecrated servant of God. No rank, or wealth, or secular dignities; no high office, or great employments of state; no successful administration of civil functions; will set you free from the law which binds you to live absolutely and supremely for the glory of God. The civil state (though not the highest in God's kingdom) may nevertheless be so related to the mystical body of Christ, as they that ministered to Him on earth were related to His Divine person. Personal holiness, therefore, and the devotion of our best and chiefest powers to the service of God, is not the duty of the Priesthood only, but of the whole Church. In this the layman is bound no less than we. *Nonne et Laici Sacerdotes? Scriptum est, Regnum quoque nos et sacerdotes Deo et Patri suo fecit*<sup>g</sup>. "Ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your bodies, and in your spirits, which are God's<sup>h</sup>." In this there is but one

<sup>g</sup> Tertullian. De exhort. Castit. vii.

<sup>h</sup> 1 Cor. vi. 20.



law for all members of His kingdom. The example and the blood-shedding of Christ bind all alike.

Of those among you that are still free to decide, I would fain ask, On what principle, on what view of life, have you been preparing to choose your future profession ?

The example of our Lord Jesus Christ not only lays down for us a rule of self-devotion ; it reveals to us, further, what is the highest work to which the powers and life of man can be devoted. The most perfect office in this world of sin, is that to which He was consecrated—the Priesthood of the atonement, the ministry of reconciliation, which He has entrusted to His Church. So far as the redeemed could partake in the work of their Redeemer, He associated His Apostles with Himself. They partook of the Divine commission which He had received of the Father : and in them He associated with Himself all who should succeed Him to the end of the world. There is no other office so nearly related to His Cross, His Sacrifice, and His Throne ; none which so takes up into itself the whole being of him that bears it ; none so near to the work of ministering angels ; none so real, changeless, or blissful, nor in so full a harmony with the will of God in Christ Jesus.

But if this be so—and none can deny it—then you must needs have some well weighed and sufficient reason for declining so high a calling. Let no man, indeed, seek it for hire, or take it by constraint. It is true all men are not invited to it: “No man taketh this honour unto himself.” But consider well why you turn away from the highest end to which a man can dedicate himself. Ask yourselves, “Is it safe for me to know this, and still to go on feeling no desire for it? Who can tell but it may be with me, in this matter, as it was with them, in whose sight He had no form nor comeliness that they should desire Him? May there not be scales upon my eyes?” Is it that secular dignities and callings seem fair, and bright; full of promise to you; and the priesthood of Christ cheerless, and straitened by self-denial? Are you feeding yourselves with hopes of elevation, or enrichment, or the pure happiness of a blameless and well-furnished life; and does the thought of forsaking all these to follow Christ make you turn from Him, and go away sorrowful?

Truly I can advise no one to choose the pastoral office as one among many professions. It will be found a false cast for the man that loves quiet, or the world, or himself. They who take it must look for little rest, and a small hire;

for anxiety, and contradiction, and the Cross. No one knows the secret toils and anxieties which wait on Holy Orders, but they who have tasted of them. You will forsake not only the world and its gifts, but also many alluring and innocent pleasures. You will choose hardness, a narrow income, perhaps a solitary home, many slights from a wealthy and prosperous age, with vexation and disappointments; much conflict with perverse and unreasonable men; peradventure loss of friends, false constructions, suspicions, reproaches. But these, too, are light dissuasives compared with the unremitting sense of responsibility, with the perpetual consciousness that souls are entrusted to your hands; for "if it happen that any take hurt or hindrance by reason of your negligence, ye know the greatness of the fault, and the horrible punishment that will ensue<sup>1</sup>."

Let a man therefore count well the cost, lest he venture upon it in precipitation and by excitement. But let him also take heed lest God be really calling him, and he unwilling to obey. There is an unwillingness which forbids Holy Orders on pain of sin; but there is an unwillingness which does not discharge us from the work of the Priesthood. There was one who arose and fled

<sup>1</sup> Office for Ordering of Priests.

to Tarshish, but he was overtaken in his flight. So will it be with you if the Lord of that prophet have cast His eye on you for His service. It takes some time to bring our will under the yoke. It is a hard thing to die to ourselves, even though we be convinced that a pastor's life is the work to which He is drawing us; there are abundant unchastened longings, and lingering regrets, that make men hang back, and hope that they may still be spared. Life and the world look brighter and fairer as we seem drawn away from them: they are never so longed for as when the lot is cast that we must forsake them. But let us take care lest this be a criminal slackness of heart. Do we not owe ourselves to Him? Has He not kept some of you pure from childhood; and does He not seem thereby to claim you for His own? Has He not brought some of you to a repentance which is as a second regeneration; do you not owe yourselves in restitution for the past? It may be some have spoken undutiful things of His Church, and great things of themselves; or they have indulged themselves in assuming a higher tone than others in practice and opinion; and have they not thereby, as it were, pledged themselves to greater self-denials, and to an austerer discipline?



Here then is a test to prove the reality of their professions. Nothing so tries a man whether he be in earnest, or no: nothing so searches and unmasks us, as to watch for souls among those who must give account. We may *profess* great things cheaply, but it costs dear to *do* and to *suffer* them. This is a wholesome correction for an age of controversial theology. One might almost say that no man has a right to assume a freedom of giving opinions, until he has obtained it with a great sum in doing the work of the Church.

But besides these particular reasons, there is one which, at this moment, appeals to us with a most constraining force. The Church calls to you with a voice not to be denied. The work of regaining a wayward, luxurious, disunited people; of recovering alienated millions to her fold; of re-converting to God, and to His Christ, whole towns and cities, corrupt beyond words, and defiled beyond imagination—oppresses her utmost strength. She asks not for civil privileges, nor for learned works, nor for gifts of money, nor for any external and material aids (though all these in their place are good and useful); but for men who will give up the world for the love of God; who will live no more unto themselves, but unto Him that died for them and rose again. She demands



the living strength of her children, guided and quickened by charity and self-denial. It is the wages of your spiritual nurture that she asks of you in recompense. She seeks "not yours, but you;" your whole life and being, with all its thoughts, affections, and energies, that they may be weaned from the softness, glitter, and allurements of the world, and wholly joined to the powers of redemption, which through her are working out the perfection of God's elect. In the solemn Ember season now past, some who have been with you from boyhood, companions of your every day, and of all your studies and pursuits, have been preparing themselves to receive the light yoke of His service. At this very hour they are recording their vows at the Altar of God. Their example is a bidding and an invitation to you. Choose as they have chosen. It is a choice you never shall repent. You will find it full of recompense; full of calm joy in life, and, if you be faithful, full of peace at the last. Happy are ye if ye can make it. Listen, therefore, with a watchful ear for the promptings of the Holy Ghost, by whom alone all true pastors are moved to take upon them that office and ministry. If He call you, arise with a ready heart; and humble yourselves before Him that bears the everlasting Priesthood; and through Him offer

up yourselves to be consecrated, so far as we may be, to that same end for which He was born, and to the very work for which He came into the world.

## SERMON IV.

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CHRIST'S KINGDOM NOT OF THIS WORLD.

Nov. 5, 1843.

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ST. JOHN xviii. 36.

“My kingdom is not of this world : if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews : but now is my kingdom not from hence.”

By these words our Lord declared that He was indeed a king : but that His kingdom was neither such as should challenge the authority of Pilate's master, nor defend His own person from the malice of the Jews. “My kingdom is not of this world.” It has no legions nor armaments of earthly warfare. If it were of this world, My servants by might and mastery would set Me free. I am a king, but My kingdom is “not from hence :” that is to say, the seat of My kingdom is not earth but heaven : My throne is not in the provinces of the world, but “in the light which no man can approach unto,” in the heavenly court, at the right hand of God, where are seraphim and cherubim, thrones and dominions, principalities and powers.

And from this we may understand that, as its seat is in the heavenly state, so is its end or

design transcendent and above this world. The kingdom of Christ does not aim at gathering to itself earthly and secular powers: it does not seek to consolidate a temporal system, nor to govern mankind in their natural or national conditions. For these provision is made in the paternal and political offices with which individuals and states are invested in the course of nature, and by the general providence of God. The kingdom of Christ is not related to man only as he is an inhabitant of this transitory world, neither does it terminate within this narrow sphere. Its aim and purpose is some destiny above the conditions of nature, the course of time, and the changes of mortality. Its end, so far as it is revealed to us, is the reconstituting of a new order in the creation of God<sup>a</sup>, by gathering from the ages of the world the fellowship of His elect; and bringing them, through probation, to perfection of holiness, and to eternal life. Neither is it related to this state of trial only. Though, with the winding up of the mystery of their mortal life, that part of the mediatorial office of Christ shall be fulfilled, yet “of his kingdom there shall be no end<sup>b</sup>.” Its perfect manifestation is to come hereafter, when the mystical number of God’s elect, “the hundred and forty and four thousand redeemed from the

<sup>a</sup> ἀποκατάστασις πάντων, Acts iii. 21.

<sup>b</sup> St. Luke i. 33.

earth," shall be accomplished at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

Once more, the prerogatives and powers of His kingdom, which issue from its heavenly seat, and are directed to their transcendent and eternal end, must needs be transcendent and eternal too. They consist in gifts of grace, by which men redeemed from sin are restored to holiness; and in laws of government, whereby the regenerate are ruled as subjects of the kingdom of heaven. The laws of His dominion run out into the eternal world, and have their awards beyond the grave. Their sanctions are life and death everlasting: the changeless destinies of man. It deals with us as we are related to eternity, and all its administration, prerogatives, and powers, are unearthly and divine.

Such, then, as included in what has been said, is the visible Church of Christ, which is His kingdom partially revealed on earth. It is the embodying and expression of a heavenly order; οὐρανός ἐπιγεια: the lower, imperfect, and probationary part of that spiritual kingdom which dwells on high in its proper realm: the outskirts of its glory. Moreover, it is the ordained means of effectuating and fulfilling the ultimate design and aim of His kingdom in the gathering and salvation of the elect. As the Incarnation, and



the Atonement, the Birth, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of the Son of God are the meritorious and productive *causes* of this mystery of grace, so the illumination of truth, and the gifts of the Spirit, through the ministry and Sacraments of the visible Church on earth, are the effective and proximate *means*. Therefore when He ascended up on high to sit down in His Father's throne, and to open His mediatorial kingdom in the order of angelic and perfect spirits, He ordained, commissioned, and empowered a visible ministry on earth. They became His representatives and witnesses, the highest officers of His kingdom, second in it to Himself alone ; invested with a spiritual power limited only by the will and expressed commission of their unseen Lord. In all things of the soul and of the world to come ; in all things relating, by direct spiritual order, to the aim and design of the Incarnation and Atonement of the Son of God, and to the perfecting and salvation of the elect, the visible Church is sole and absolute, having no superior but Christ alone. From Him, the only source of spiritual jurisdiction, all rules and laws of the inner life of man must be derived : all commissions to bind and loose ; to gather and to rule His elect ; to admit to holy Sacraments, and mysteries of grace ; to

define and to teach doctrines of truth ; to use correction for the health of souls ; to legislate and to judge, in matters purely spiritual, and of the kingdom of God.

1. The first general inference to be drawn from what has been said is, that separation from the policy of the world is the first law of the Church. Its very charter is to be a kingdom "not of this world." And by this heavenly origin it bears perpetual witness to the advent of the Word made flesh ; and forces upon the consciousness of mankind the reality of the world unseen. The broad contrast of the Church with empires and kingdoms of the world in its ends and means, its power and policy, is a part of its divine office and design. To grasp at powers, other than the suasions of truth and the pleadings of the Spirit, is a direct contradiction of its own nature, and a defeat of its highest aim. "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels ? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be<sup>c</sup> ?" "If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews."

By what was it that the Apostles of our Lord prevailed to found His kingdom in all lands, but

<sup>c</sup> St. Matt. xxvi. 53, 54.

by their perfect separateness from the power and policy of the world, their perfect abstinence from all secular means? Absolute in their own spiritual commission, they were, in all things temporal, obedient to the powers ordained of God<sup>d</sup>. By preaching and suffering, by prayer and patience, by holiness and martyrdom, by the virtues and attractions of the cross, they planted in all states and kingdoms of the earth a dominion which was separate from and superior to them all: and, binding them together in one body by the bonds and sympathies of the Spirit, they subjected all alike to the one Head over all, which is Jesus Christ. In this the world lent them no aid: the kingdoms of the earth fought

<sup>d</sup> Rom. xiii. 1. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers." St. Paul says this "to shew that it was not for the subversion of the commonwealth that Christ introduced His laws; but for the better ordering of it, and to teach men not to be taking up unnecessary and unprofitable wars. For the plots formed against us for the truth's sake are sufficient; and we have no need to be adding temptations superfluous and unprofitable . . . these regulations are for all, even for priests and monks, and not for those of secular occupations only . . . if thou be an Apostle even, or an Evangelist, or a Prophet, or any thing whatsoever, inasmuch as this subjection is not subversive of religion." S. Chrys. in Rom. Hom. xxiii. So also S. Augustine, Theodoret, and Theophylact. in loc. Notwithstanding this, Bellarmine says, "Ex hoc non sequitur S. Petrum et Apostolos cæteros subjectos fuisse *de jure* temporalibus potestatibus." Opuscula. De Excusat. Barclaii, c. iii. 6.

not for them but against them : and yet by their very opposition wrought with them in their work ; perfecting the patience of the saints, and exalting saints to martyrs : so that, while they used spiritual weapons alone, all things worked together for the kingdom of Christ ; His own servants by living and dying in witness against the world ; the world itself by the help of ten bitter persecutions : and, while it perfected the servants of the Cross, it fell before the imperishable Church ; while it beat the air in vain, it subdued itself ; when it seemed to have the mastery, it was itself taken in the snare. A mightier than the world had risen up in all its provinces, and penetrated into its very life. The emblems of its secular greatness gave place to the tokens of Christ's humiliation : and the majesty of the Cæsars yielded itself to the kingdom of the cross.

Thus far in the history of the Gospel it is abundantly clear, that the Church preserved its purely spiritual character from intermixture with the kingdoms of the world. It is, however, a favourite argument with a certain school of objectors, to allege that this spiritual and separate character was forfeited at the conversion of the empire to the faith. But this is false in fact. There was, as there could be, no change in the commission and institutions of Christ. The



Church was still the same. On the empire, indeed, a mighty change had passed. It was thenceforward endowed with a new capacity; with a perception of its own relation to the heavenly world; and of its subjection to the laws of Christ. It was invested with new responsibilities, and learned to use its powers for new and higher aims. But though the Church pervaded its whole frame with an universal presence, there was no commutation nor collision of powers. They moved from different centres, and traversed different spheres<sup>e</sup>. The Church lost none of its distinct and heavenly character when it became imperial: it admitted no principles of secularity when its canons were embodied with the public laws: it forfeited none of its absolute spiritual commission from its unseen Head, when its chiefs were cited to the councils of princes<sup>f</sup>. Its organiza-

<sup>e</sup> “Colimus ergo et imperatorem sic, quomodo et nobis licet et ipsi expedit, ut hominem a Deo secundum; et quicquid est, a Deo consecutum, et solo Deo minorem. Hoc et ipse volet: sic enim omnibus major est dum solo vero Deo minor est.” Tertull. ad Scapulam, § 2. See also S. Athan., tom. i. p. 371, and S. Optat., lib. iii. c. 3.

<sup>f</sup> “Si autem de fide loquamur Christianâ et legibus ad Ecclesiasticam spectantibus disciplinam, ipsi etiam Imperatores Christiani ingenuè multoties professi sunt, nihil sibi juris in istiusmodi sancendis rebus tributum esse. Sic Constantinus Magnus, Valentinianus, Marcianus, Theodosius, aliique quorum verba alibi retulimus. Quin ipse etiam omnium peritissimus



tion was incorporated with the civil state : it was made capable of holding and transmitting possessions<sup>g</sup> consecrated to the service of God, that is, it became national, established, endowed, by the super-adding of new accidents, without change or forfeiture in its original and essential character.

2. Another inference as obvious as the last is, that it is an act of the highest unfaithfulness, and a direct contradiction of the first laws of its own existence, for the Church, as such, to admit into itself the principles, or to assume the temporal powers, of the world. In proportion as it becomes conformed to the kingdoms of the earth, it loses the stamp of its heavenly origin : it ceases to testify for Christ, and to rule in His name : it thereby abdicates its commission, and denies in act that Christ has upon earth any kingdom at all.

From the time that the powers of the world became Christian, and spiritual rulers were united in a concurrent jurisdiction with secular princes, a new class of questions forced them-

legum Imperator Justinianus, in eâ fuit sententiâ, leges nempe civiles non præcedere debere sed sequi Ecclesiasticas . . . Hinc est, quod etiamsi Imperatores multa de Ecclesiasticis personis, et rebus in constitutionibus suis ediderint, *nihil tamen de novo constituerunt*, sed ea tantum quæ ab *Ecclesiasticis synodis prius constituta fuerant*, ipsi suâ etiam auctoritate confirmarunt.”

Bevereg. Synodicon. Prolegom., p. 2. See also Thorndike's Right of the Church in a Christian State, pp. 231, 232. ed. 1649.

<sup>g</sup> Sarpi on Ecclesiastical Revenues, p. 11.

selves upon the Church. It became her duty to teach the princes of the world how to consecrate to God the powers they had received at His hand; to counsel them in their deliberations for the people entrusted to their civil care, and to guide them in using their earthly prerogatives for the peace and welfare of the Church. It is not to be wondered at, if, as the pure theocracy of Israel sunk in the secular debasement of its after history, so the visible kingdom of Christ, spiritual and separate as it was in the beginning, should become entangled and obscured, in the course of this turbid and tumultuous world: for the same law of probation is ordained for both. It is impossible to do more than refer to the outline of this extensive subject. Indeed, we shall perhaps maintain a clearer view of the principles involved in it, if, as much as possible, we avoid all details.

It is undeniable that the spirit of the world did in later ages diffuse itself in the visible body of the Church, drawing after it principles and a wisdom which are earthly and alien from Christ; and diverting its prominent and active powers from the purely spiritual end for which it was ordained<sup>h</sup>. But it would be a false account

<sup>h</sup> "Status insuper Ecclesiæ nonne factus est totus quasi brutalis et monstruosus? ubi cælum deorsum, hoc est scilicet

of this unquestionable fact, if we were to suppose that the first or chief agents in these departures from the spirit of Christ's kingdom were uniformly evil, or conscious of their deflections. The errors which entered into Christendom were not theories projected at once and in full completeness from any individual mind, but the accumulated deviations of ages and multitudes of men. So, doubtless, in results the most disastrous to mankind, unnumbered agents, and some themselves guileless and pure, will be found to have contributed; men, themselves dead to the world, to have impelled others with a direct force in the career of secularity.

It is remarkable how both in the East and in the West this tendency, though under different aspects, developed itself in the same direction. In both the spiritual element became more or less subservient to the secular. In the East, for instance, we find the later Greek emperors, not

*id quod spirituale est, et terra sursum, spiritus serviens et caro dominans. Principale accessorium, et accessorium principale, usque ad hoc ut quidam delirare non dubitent quod per inventiones humanas etiam melius quam per legem divinam Evangelicam regeretur, quasi minus sit anima quam corpus, et spiritualis quam carnalis fructus.*" Gerson. Serm. coram Papa. See Browne's *Fasciculus Rerum Expetend.*, tom. ii. p. 891. Petrus de Alliaco, de *necessitate Reformationis Ecclesiæ in capite et in membris.* Appendix to tom. ii. of Gerson's Works.

content with the Christian prerogatives wielded by the earlier, gradually proceeding to extravagant assumptions. We find also the later councils and canonists of the Greek Church favouring and enlarging their claims<sup>i</sup>. In like manner also in the West, we find the holy boldness of earlier days settling down into the worldly policy of later Pontiffs<sup>k</sup>; and saints that withstood the world by patience and the arms of the Spirit, drawn into precedent by the advocates of the Roman court for assumptions of universal sovereignty. As if it were a small thing to claim an universal jurisdiction in things spiritual over the whole Church of God, and that by Divine right, the Bishop of Rome took to himself a power of disposing also of all things temporal on the plea of promoting spiritual ends<sup>l</sup>. It matters little whether that

<sup>i</sup> "Ita posteriorum Græcorum adulatio, suffragantibus ipsis eorum conciliis, eò evaserat, ut Imperatoribus facultatem largiretur dispensandi de Canonibus Œcumenicarum etiam Synodorum quo illi jam ecclesiasticis legibus omnibus solvebantur." Thomassin de Vetere et Novâ Eccles. Disciplinâ, pars i. lib. i. xxi. 9.

<sup>k</sup> See the account of the Pontificate of Martin IV., Boniface VIII., in Döllinger's History of the Church, vol. iv. p. 76, 77, 80—84. Dolman, 1841.

<sup>l</sup> "Asserimus, Pontificem ut Pontificem, etsi non habeat ullam merè temporalem potestatem, tamen habere *in ordine ad bonum spirituale*, summam potestatem disponendi de temporalibus rebus omnium Christianorum." Bellarm. Disput. de Summo Pontifice, lib. v. c. 6.



power be claimed, in scholastic distinctions, as direct or indirect. In its consequences, and in the confusions resulting from it, there is no difference<sup>m</sup>. It assumes what our Lord in the text denies, that is to say, a power, whether temporal or spiritual matters little, to dispose of the things of this world: and that too upon a principle which overthrows the true aim of Christ's

<sup>m</sup> "Restat postrema pars disputationis de Pontifice, quæ est de potestate ipsius temporali, de quâ quidem quæstione tres inveniuntur auctorum sententiæ.

"Prima est, Summum Pontificem jure divino habere plenissimam potestatem in universum orbem terrarum, tum in rebus ecclesiasticis, tum in politicis. . . .

"Altera non tam sententia quàm hæresis in altero extremo posita, duo docet. Primo Pontificem ut Pontificem et ex jure divino, nullam habere temporalem potestatem, nec posse ullo modo imperare principibus secularibus, nedum eos regnis et principatu privare, etiamsi illi privari alioquî mereantur. Secundo docet non licuisse Pontifici aliisque Episcopis accipere temporale dominium, &c.

"Tertia sententia media et Catholicorum theologorum communis est, Pontificem ut Pontificem, non habere *directè* et *immediatè* ullam temporalem potestatem, sed solum *spiritualem*; tamen ratione spiritualis habere saltem *indirectè* potestatem quandam, eamque summam, in temporalibus." Bel-larm. Disput. de Summo Pontifice, lib. v. c. i. 1—3.

Barclay ascribes the first opinion to the Canonists, the third to the theologians of the Roman Church: and says truly, "ita quicquid illi recto ordine, id isti obliquè et per consequentias Papæ tribuunt, ut ratio tantum diversa, res eadem sit." De Potestate Papæ in Principes, &c. p. 5.



supermundane kingdom; for it was alleged that, without such a power, “the ecclesiastical commonwealth” would not be “perfect and sufficient of herself in order to her own end<sup>n</sup>.” What was the end of the ecclesiastical commonwealth through the ages when this theory was in the ascendent, the archives of every kingdom in the West of Europe<sup>o</sup>, the history of ecclesiastical benefices<sup>p</sup>, and the records of the Roman chancery<sup>q</sup>, will shew.

<sup>n</sup> Overall's Convocation Book, p. 229, and Bellarm. Disp., lib. v. c. vii. 3, and De Excusat. Barclaii, c. iii. 4.

<sup>o</sup> See Gravamina Nationis Germanicæ, in Browne's Fasciculus, Rerum Expetendarum, &c. tom. i. p. 334, &c. Gravamina Ecclesiæ Gallicanæ, ibid. tom. ii. p. 238, &c. Antiqua Regni et Ecclesiæ Angliæ Gravamina, ibid. 415, &c. For Spain see Bramhall's account of the Council of Castile, Just Vindication of the Church of England, Works, pp. 114—117. ed. fol. 1676. Also Excerpta from S. Bernard., Gerson, John of Salisbury, Matthew Paris, &c. Browne's Fascic., tom. ii. pp. 887—902.

<sup>p</sup> Thomassin De Beneficiis, pars ii. lib. i. xlv. 1—3; Sarpi's Benefices and Revenues, pp. 118. 125. 145. 174.

<sup>q</sup> Nicolai de Clemangis de Corrupto Ecclesiæ Statu, c. 5. Aureum Speculum Papæ, P. iii. i. in Browne's Fasciculus, tom. ii. p. 94. “Luce enim clarius constat, quod pro majori parte facta et ordinata in quatuor generalibus conciliis principalibus, et aliis conciliis per temporum successiones statuta, crescente avaritia Pontificum, Cardinalium, et Prælatorum, tam per Papæ reservationes, quam per iniquas Camerae Apostolicæ Constitutiones, et Cancellariæ regulas, et formulas Audientię causarum Rotæ, et ambitiosas Dispensationes, Absolutiones, Indulgentias, Confessionalia, Officium Pœnitentiariæ, sint fere imminuta, anni-

From this principle a manifold secularity spread itself in the Western Church. Spiritual powers were turned to worldly ends. The ecclesiastical system, which had been the source and guide of civilization, the inventor and perfecter of science, the true legislator, the fountain of political and judicial wisdom, the centre of organization, the guardian of domestic and international peace—forasmuch as its end, being the highest and most perfect, included in itself all lower and less perfect ends of human and secular wisdom—this principle of unity and order became at times itself, so far as a divine work can be swayed aside by human obliquity, the source of tumult and intrigue. The power of spiritual censure, excommunication, and interdict, were wielded by hands that measured their strength with the princes of the world in fleets and armies<sup>r</sup>. From the same principle of disorder came also an evil which is the converse of the last, namely that of using worldly policy for spiritual ends. For instance; the use of persecution to promote unity of faith; the deposition of princes for heresy; the absolving their subjects from oaths of obedi-

hilata, et quasi in derisum, et oblivionem posita.” Gerson de Modis uniendi ac reform. Eccles., tom. ii. pp. 182, 183, et p. 194.

<sup>r</sup> See Döllinger’s History of the Church, vol. iv. p. 76.

ence<sup>s</sup>; the instigating their destruction<sup>t</sup>. These fundamental laws of spiritual and civil anarchy, howsoever repudiated now by individuals and even by Churches of the Roman obedience, were nevertheless the potent and active principles of that court and see for ages: they were formally elaborated by Schoolmen, defended by Doctors, recognised in councils<sup>u</sup>; and, what is more than all polemical arguments, openly put in act. Five

<sup>s</sup> “Ex hoc principio satis apertè colligitur, esse in Romano Pontifice potestatem temporalia disponendi, usque ad ipsorum Regum et Imperatorum *depositionem*: nam per ipsam spiritualem potestatem potest summus Pontifex ligare Principes seculares vinculo excommunicationis, potest per eandem *solvere populos a juramento fidelitatis et obedientiæ*: potest obligare eosdem populos sub excommunicationis pœna, ut *regi excommunicato non pareant*, atque ut *alium sibi eligant Regem*.”—Bellarm. de Excusat. Barclaii; c. iii. 4.

<sup>t</sup> See Jeremy Taylor's Sermon on Nov. 5, pp. 141, 142, 143. 151, 152. folio. 1678.

<sup>u</sup> Bellarmine cites ten Councils, in which the temporal power of the Pope was recognised, i. e. one held by Gregory II., a second by Gregory VII. “His addi debent,” he proceeds, “alia quinque Concilia habita a successoribus Gregorii VII., videlicet Beneventanum à Victore III., Placentinum ab Urbano II., Romanum a Paschale II., Coloniense a Gelasio II., Remense a Calisto II., in quibus confirmata est sententia Gregorii VII.” To these he adds the council of Clement under Urban II., Lateran under Innocent III., Lyons under Innocent IV. “Si hæc,” he says, “non est Ecclesiæ Catholicæ vox, ubi, obsecro, eam inveniemus?”—Bellarm. de Potestate Papæ, Opuscula, pp. 845, 846.

times the Roman Pontiff has assumed to depose emperors and kings; and to absolve their subjects from their allegiance<sup>x</sup>. And these acts were justified by his most cherished and honoured advocates<sup>y</sup>. The inveterate and unnatural schism by which this our Church is afflicted, is the perpetual memorial, and ever present witness of the attempt of Pius the Fifth to depose the Queen of England for heresy and usurpation<sup>z</sup>. Obsolete as these evil doctrines may have become by the silent and irresistible control of Divine Providence, yet their miserable consequences are still active to the distraction of Christendom. Moreover, they have never been retracted with the solemnities of their publication. Until they be effaced by an authentic and recorded disavowal,

<sup>x</sup> Henry IV. Emperor, Philip I. of France, Frederick II. Emperor; Bellarm. *ibid.* To which may be added Henry VIII. and Elizabeth. Bellarmine says Leo Isauricus was *excommunicated* by Gregory II. for heresy, and “*vectigalibus Italiae mulctatum.*” There is no mention of deposition.

<sup>y</sup> Bellarmine quotes writers of all ranks and dignities, i. e. twenty-one Italian, sixteen French, twenty Spanish, twelve German, seven English or Scotch, who have maintained the temporal power of the Pope. *De Potestate Papæ, Opuscula*, pp. 831, 842. At the head of the list is Gregory VII., with whom all the rest, including Bellarmine, coincide.

<sup>z</sup> Collier's *Eccles. History*, vol. ii. p. 521. “It is plain that *recusancy* and disobedience came hand in hand.”—Jeremy Taylor's *Sermon*, p. 147.



they must stand, without restitution or confession, as a heavy score of unrepented sins<sup>a</sup>. And

<sup>a</sup> To all whose "heart's desire and prayer to God" is that the Catholic Church may, in His own time, and by His wise and healing providence, be once more knit together in the grace of charity, it must be a matter of devout thankfulness, first, that the causes of our miserable divisions have been, in so great a measure, of a *secular* kind; and next, that these have been already, by the grace and working of God, wonderfully weakened if not altogether withdrawn. On the former point, it is important to examine carefully the line taken by our foremost divines, for instance by Archbishop Bramhall, who even heads one of his controversial Treatises as follows: "Schism guarded and beaten back upon the right owner, shewing that our great controversy about Papal Power is not a question of faith, but of interest and profit; not with the Church of Rome, but with the Court of Rome &c." Bramhall, Works, p. 286. folio, 1675: see also Sect. 1. c. 9. p. 337. On the latter point, the late Charles Butler, after stating the opposition between the Transalpine and Cisalpine doctrines on the temporal and spiritual power of the Pope, says, "This difference of opinion exists *now* no longer, the Transalpine divines having insensibly adopted, on this subject, the Cisalpine opinions." Works, vol. v. p. 36. The Cisalpine opinion cannot be better stated than in the following words; "Nor do Catholics, as Catholics, believe that the Pope has any direct or indirect authority over the temporal concerns of states or the jurisdiction of princes. Hence, should the Pope pretend to absolve or to dispense with his Majesty's subjects from their allegiance, on account of heresy or schism, such dispensation they would view as frivolous and null." . . . "as to temporal power, none could be exercised when as yet (i. e. in the early ages) which was its origin, no territory was possessed: and the positive declaration of Jesus Christ 'that his kingdom was not of this world,' remained strongly impressed on the mind of them who professed

history must still rehearse the train of complicated evils, by rebellion, treason, and massacre, which this single dogma directly, or by its ethical consequences, has produced: and we must look upon those who permitted the attempt to justify such things, who reaped the illusory benefits of transgression, and commended the doers of these evil deeds<sup>b</sup>, as a spectacle of awe and sorrow<sup>c</sup>. These are grievous

themselves and were believed to be his vicars.” Faith of Catholics, Propos. xv. pp. 165-6. Such is the received doctrine, and declared Ecclesiastical law in all Roman Catholic states at this day. By this, one inexhaustible cause of conflict and discord has been in the last three centuries removed from Western Christendom.

<sup>b</sup> Dr. Pusey’s Sermon, Nov. 5. 1838, pp. 29, 30. and note.

<sup>c</sup> “Causa dispositiva Schismatis Græcorum, inter alias una fuerit; propter gravamina Romanæ Ecclesiæ in exactionibus, excommunicationibus et statutis.” P. de Alliaco de Reform. Eccles. c. ii. “Reformatio totius corporis Ecclesiæ, et particularis Ecclesiæ Romanæ, est de arduis pertinentibus ad Fidem. Nam ejus generalis deformatio non mediocriter Fidem tangit, et per consequens ejus reformatio.” Ibid. c. i. Gerson, Op. tom. ii. p. 905. What was the great western schism, by which the Church was divided and torn into two, and sometimes three, conflicting sections for a space of fifty years and more, but the natural result of the secularity of which the Pontifical palace was the focus? There is no period of the Church, as cotemporaneous writers testify, so frightfully conspicuous for flagrant scandals, contempt of discipline, corruption of manners, rejection of truth, encroachment of the civil power. See Gerson, de Morbis et Calamitatibus Ecclesiæ, tom. ii. p. 309. It is im-

words to speak of any Christian body: especially of that Church once so full of charity to mankind. But truth forces them. False charity is falsehood after all: and truth soon or late will avenge itself on those who violate or slight it. I do not recount these things to re-awaken in us any feelings but sorrow and humiliation for the sins of Christendom. They are historical data on which to ascertain the conformity of the mediæval policy of the Roman court with the Kingdom which is "not of this world;" to indicate the height to which it had attained, and the greatness of its fall<sup>d</sup>. And lastly, I do so because it is the legitimate moral result of this daring and clandestine policy, together with its twofold providential defeat, that we this day commemorate.

possible to say how deeply the contests of the sixteenth century may have been aggravated by the schism of the fifteenth: and how much of our trials and perils of this day may be ultimately traced to the shock which both faith and unity suffered at that time.

<sup>d</sup> "Clement died in April, 1314. His Pontificate proves to us that which might have been foreseen under Martin IV. and Boniface IX. [qu. VIII. ?] that the Papal power had fallen from that height to which the circumstances of Christendom had with a sure hand conducted it, and that it had surrendered itself to a worldly, calculating, and sometimes avaricious policy, in consequence of which the common father of the faithful became the willing instrument of one prince, and the imperious master of another." Döllinger's *History of the Church*, vol. iv. p. 104. Dolman, 1841.

The two events which are united in the acts of this day, different as they are in their circumstances, have this at least in common. They exhibit the mercy of God in preserving the English Church and people from the secular domination of the Roman Pontiff.

The conspiracy against the king and the three estates of England was conceived, planned, and brought to the eve of perpetration, by members of the Roman Communion<sup>e</sup>: it was designed to advance the interests of the Roman Church<sup>f</sup>. It was not indistinctly known that some such attempt was in preparation<sup>g</sup>. The intent was encouraged by the subtilities of casuistry, being directly defensible on principles prevalent and commended among the writers<sup>h</sup> of that Church.

In the other event, "the Most High" that "ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will," confounded our adversaries in the very point wherein they had usurped upon His sole prerogative. They who had claimed

<sup>e</sup> Lingard's History of England, vol. ix. p. 33, &c.

<sup>f</sup> Apologia pro Garnetto, p. 4. Sir Everard Digby's Letter to his wife, Biographia Britannica, note E. Collier, Eccl. History, vol. ii. p. 690.

<sup>g</sup> Dr. Pusey's Sermon, Nov. 5. 1838. Hallam's Constitutional History, vol. i. p. 554, note.

<sup>h</sup> See collection of authorities given by Jeremy Taylor, already referred to in note r. p. 82.



“the power to bestow the empire on whom they listed<sup>i</sup>,” who also said of themselves “We are to this end placed over the nations and kingdoms that we may destroy and pull up and build and plant<sup>k</sup>,”—saw, in one hour, the secret labours and confident expectations of many years, scattered “as a dream when one awaketh<sup>l</sup>.” A special providence appears to have shielded this Church and realm from falling again under the secular dominion of Rome. Every time it has re-entered, it has been cast out again with a more signal expulsion; every time it has seemed to gather strength, it has been more utterly confounded. The reign of princes alien from the English Church has been twice brought to an end with a speed truly significant: foreign armaments ignominiously baffled: conspiracies at home laid bare: the insinuation of secret emissaries detected and exposed: the whole line of the House of Stuart repelled by steady and uniform defeats. If a

<sup>i</sup> Hadrian IV. Overall's Convocation Book, p. 310.

<sup>k</sup> Innocent III. Ibid, p. 311.

<sup>l</sup> It is enough for the purpose of this Sermon to treat the Revolution of 1688 as an event in providence, without regard to the agents or principles involved in it. No one can deny that it was an event in providence, nor that by that event the re-entrance of the Roman influence was prevented, and no member of the English Church can but look upon this as a mercy.

series of providential acts may be read in combination, and thereby taken to express the purpose of the Divine Ruler of the world<sup>m</sup>, it would seem to be the will of Heaven, that the dominion of the Roman Pontificate may never be again set up in this Church and realm.

There are many duties to which this day of commemoration yearly recalls us : but it is impossible to do more than refer shortly to one or two.

1. And, first, we are specially warned to humble ourselves in thankfulness for all God's undeserved mercy to this Church and nation. In the midst of our great worldly exaltation, there is exceeding

<sup>m</sup> " Surely there are in every man's life certain rubs, doublings, and wrenches, which pass awhile under the effects of chance ; but at the last, well examined, prove the mere hand of God. It was not dumb chance that, to discover the fougade or powder plot, contrived a miscarriage in the letter. I like the victory of 1588 the better for that one occurrence which our enemies imputed to our dishonour, and the partiality of fortune, to wit, the tempests, and contrariety of winds. King Philip did not detract from the nation when he said, he sent his armada to fight with men, and not to combat with the winds. Where there is a manifest disproportion between the persons and forces of two several agents, upon a maxim of reason we may promise the victory to the superior : but when unexpected accidents slip in, and unthought of occurrences intervene, these must proceed from a power that owes no obedience to those axioms : where, as in the hand-writing upon the wall, we may behold the hand, but see not the spring that moves it." Browne's Religio Medici, Works, vol. ii. p. 24.

danger lest we be lifted up and inflated with a spirit of secular, and still more of spiritual, pride. It is for our very safety ever to remember that, as we owe our elevation, so also we owe our continuance, to the movements of His will; that there are abroad in the earth antagonist powers, before whom we should utterly melt away if He were to withdraw the restraints He has laid upon them. He has taught us by a series of marvellous interpositions at the crisis of action, and in the moment of accomplishment, how the very being of Churches and kingdoms hangs upon His breath. A spirit of national vain glory would be our perdition: our safety lies in self-humiliation, in great charity to all mankind, especially to the members of His Church now miserably torn asunder; and in absolute obedience to the kingdom and will of Christ.

2. Another plain duty of which this day admonishes us, is that we realize to ourselves, by a clear and vivid perception, the greatness of the blessings which God has mercifully preserved to us; and, before all, the integrity of His spiritual kingdom in this land. I say integrity, not in relation to our own spiritual condition in His sight; God forbid: the best fall infinitely below the spiritual order in which they stand before God. I speak not of us, but of the Church our

mother, which He has so watchfully fostered and preserved<sup>n</sup>.

If we would rightly understand both the acts by which, for just causes, and by a rightful authority, the Roman jurisdiction was finally removed, and the true nature of the ecclesiastical prerogative claimed by our princes, we must follow the Statutes of Provisors along the course of our history. The act of the sixteenth century was the last and the successful effort in a long series of ineffectual struggles against the secular encroachment of the Roman court<sup>o</sup>. It was counselled, com-

<sup>n</sup> This is to be confined strictly within the terms of the subject. We have too much cause to humble ourselves for personal secularity, as well as for the wide-spread Erastianism of feeling and practice by which we are deeply suffering.

<sup>o</sup> "What was threatened and effected in part in the days of Henry III. and Edward III., was perfected in the reign of Henry VIII." . . . "These former kings, who reigned in England about the years 1200 and 1300, might properly be called the first Reformers: and their laws of Proviso's and Præmunire's, or more properly Præmoneres, the beginning of the Reformation. They laid the foundation, and Henry the Eighth builded upon it." Bramhall, *Just Vindication of the Church of England*, Disc. II. c. vi. p. 99. fol. 1676. See also *ibid.*, p. 73. In fact, the Regale is the counteraction produced by the Pontificate: and the dangerous tendency to set up 'nationality' and 'liberties' even to the breach of Catholic unity, was a defensive recoil from the excesses of a spiritual jurisdiction which had become secular and encroaching. The true solution of the relation of independent nations to the Catholic



pleted, and justified by men whom the advocates of the Pontiff could, in no other point, attain of error<sup>p</sup>. And the principle on which they rested their act, and on which our relation to the Roman Church is still amply to be defended, is this—that there is no one supreme prince or power in things temporal from whom the civil rulers of this realm derive their sovereign authority<sup>q</sup>: neither by Divine right any one supreme spiritual head on earth from whom the pastors of this Church derive their apostolical commission: that both the Spirituality and Temporality of this Church and Realm severally possess full authority and jurisdiction derived to them by succession and devolution; and that both, under Christ alone, are within their respective spheres perfect and complete. There does not exist any fountain of jurisdiction below Christ the Head of all, on whose will and authority the acts of either for right or for validity depend.

Church is to be found in the independent action of the “*Episcopatus unus concordi numerositate diffusus.*”

<sup>p</sup> Archbishop Warham and his suffragans. See Bramhall’s *Just Vindication of the Church of England*, Disc. II. ch. iii. pp. 62—65. Gardiner’s book, *De Verâ Obedientiâ*, and Tunstall’s *Letter to Cardinal Pole*. Collier, vol. ii.

<sup>q</sup> 24 Henry VIII. c. 12. Palgrave’s *History of the English Commonwealth*, vol. i. p. 647. “*Ego Constantini, vos Petri gladium habetis in manibus.*” King Edgar’s *Oration to the Clergy*, *ibid.*, and Wilkins’ *Concil.*, tom. i. p. 246; also p. 249.

This full and perfect integrity of the Church of England to do all spiritual acts for her own flock and people, no more crosses or contravenes the obligations of ecclesiastical unity, or canonical order, or the authority of councils truly general, or any other laws of the universal Church, or the duty of intercourse with all Churches of Christendom, on the basis of Catholic communion, and on the conditions of Catholic truth, than does the independence of this realm and kingdom clash with the laws of nature and of nations, by which the states of the world are mutually related for the preservation of international justice and universal peace.

3. And, lastly, it is our duty to give ourselves in entire faith to the work of carrying out the principles which the Providence of God has thus preserved to us. Surely they are a trust for others yet to come. We have been made the depository of no light gifts: the stewards, rather, of an exceeding treasure.

If there were ever days in which the true and living principles of Christ's kingdom were more needed than before for the peace and government of mankind, they are these which are now upon the earth. All the phenomena of the world warn us that the latter days have set in. We have seen the frames of ancient states heaved

upward from their very base ; and their fastest bonds of order parted asunder. The active and executive powers of government seem every where to wax feeble ; and the office of the civil ruler to become rather the index of the popular will than the source of a steady control. So prominent and universal are the tokens of this unnatural and inverted law, that political speculators deduce for themselves the conclusion that such is the purpose and will of God. We see at this day the internal unity of the firmest states yielding to new elements of confusion. Even they that seem most still and peaceful, carry within them forces that at any hour might burst forth and rend them piecemeal. And as with the civil, so is it with the spiritual rule. From two of the mightiest kingdoms of western Europe this generation has seen the Church all but blotted out. At its very centre, it rests upon the deceitful calmness of a flood which at any hour may lift up its lowest depths and scatter it to the winds. They who once claimed to plant, and to pluck up the thrones of kings, now hold their own unsteady seat by the tutelage of princes. Throughout all Christendom spiritual discipline is feeble, and the traces of Christ's kingdom weak. The sway of reason and righteousness over material force seems fast passing away. If "that which

letteth" the revelation of the son of perdition be the kingly and priestly power of Christ manifested to the world in the spiritual and civil rule, then there are tokens not a few that the time of his being "taken out of the way" is not far off. The whole aspect of the world seems to be looking out towards some new movement of the Providential hand. It is towards evening, and the day of its restless life seems well-nigh spent. The old institutions of the Christian world cast long shadows on the earth. Strange energies, spiritual and political, issue from their relaxing frames, forming themselves into new combinations, and moving rapidly towards some unknown consummation. If there be truth in the universal foreboding of Christendom, days of trial for the Church must soon come: and who can foretell what we, unworthy, may be raised up to fulfil—for what the energetic acts of the sixteenth century may have been the stern but necessary preparation? It may be, that our highly-favoured Church, amid much chastisement and rebukes of heavenly discipline, shall be fashioned and perfected until it become a principle of reconciliation between east and west, and a law of unity and peace to mankind. It may be, that our task shall be to cast up the camp of the saints against the day when the nations of Antichrist shall, for



the last time, go up and compass it about. We may be called to bear and to break the last assault of the kingdom of evil. God grant that we may be kept unspotted from the world: steadfastly cleaving to the unseen hand, which has thus far preserved us: ready to serve Him in the Church where He has blessed us with our spiritual birth, by all the powers of life, and through His strength even unto death!

# SERMON V.

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LOVE THE PREPARATION FOR CHRIST'S COMING.

Third Sunday in Advent, 1843.

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2 TIM. iv. 6, 7, 8.

“ I am now ready to be offered : and the time of my departure is at hand.

“ I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course ; I have kept the faith :

“ Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day : and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.”

THESE are the words of the great Apostle, when, broken in body by years and by sufferings, he was looking out for the coming of his Lord. His work was done. His fight and his course was over. Earth had nothing more for him to suffer or to do. There lacked nothing but his Master's coming, and for this he yearned with all his soul and with all his strength. The world has no longing that may be compared with it. His life was already “ hid with Christ in God,”

and there remained nothing now but to see Him face to face, and to enter into the unclouded meaning of the mystery for which he had laboured unto death. Through all his life of toil, the coming of the Lord had been his stay. "The day of Christ," "the day of our Lord Jesus Christ," "the coming of the Lord," "his coming and his kingdom," "that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ," this had been the bright spot in which his whole life had centred.

And the day was now come at last when the world should do for him the one only deed of kindness it could bestow. It could speed him, with the tokens of the Cross, into the presence of His Lord. It could unite him in the brotherhood of martyrdom with that same Stephen in whose blood he had been consenting. Therefore he stood unbent before the judgment-seat at which nations trembled, in that day when "no man stood with him, but all men forsook him." He closed with that last dread passage of his career in exceeding joy. "I am ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." The "strait betwixt two" in which he had so long been holden was at last dissolved, and his desire was all but accomplished. "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord the

righteous Judge,"—reversing this world's injustice,—“shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but to all them also which love his appearing.”

It is to these last words that we are chiefly concerned to refer. They are most seasonable. The manifold admonitions of this time warn us to turn from the truths and topics of our ordinary duties, to look more intently upon ourselves. Advent is as a shadow thrown forward on us by the day of our visitation. The crown of this great Apostle, though of surpassing brightness, will not be the only one that shall then be given. All Christ's true servants shall be crowned likewise; “every man in his own order;” “all those that love his appearing,” that look to it not with cold expectation, but with awful hope, and strong desire.

There is something almost too great for us to utter, too high for us to conceive, in the words, “who love his appearing.” How shall sin and dust look on to that day of fear without trembling and amazement? Prophets and saints have not been able to endure His presence in vision, and in ecstasy: how then shall we abide the day of His coming, or who shall stand when He appeareth? The “man greatly beloved,” when the vision stood before him, “retained no strength,” and his “comeliness was turned into corruption:”



the beloved disciple "fell at his feet as dead." Who then shall "love the appearing" of our Lord and Judge? Far as this is beyond all that we have attained, it is yet a state of no false imagination, no excited emotion, but a reality,—calm, deep, and mature. It is a state of high and exceeding peace, the fruit of ripe obedience: having its origin and strength in the most real and necessary affections of our spiritual nature. It may be attained by each one of us. Ought we not rather to say, it must be, if we would rise above the dubious and uncertain level of an imperfect faith? Let us endeavour, then, to ascertain what are the conditions of such a temper of mind: and the grounds on which it rests.

And first, if any one would love that day, he must have a clear and deep perception of the hatefulness of sin. To all who have learned this great lesson, the appearing of Christ is the day of perfect release from the burden and affliction of a fallen nature. The grace of regeneration has given to them a sense and a sympathy with which spiritual evil is discord and warfare. They see the creation of God marred by the power of sin: they struggle with it in perpetual outward temptations: they feel it in themselves clinging fast to them, penetrating their inmost thoughts, sullyng their purest affections. And they have

been taught to hate it with a hatred which is of God: to abhor themselves for what they are; to pray, and to strive to be delivered "from the body of this death." Such, for instance, are those that are true and disciplined penitents; who after boyhood, or youth spent of permitted sins, have turned with indignant abhorrence from the haunts, deeds, familiars, visions and memories of their past impurity. While they have chastened themselves with a discipline of humiliation, the keenness of their spiritual perception has revived. And after they are delivered from the active habit of disobedience, they enter into a depth and a mystery of darkness which they never felt before. They begin for the first time truly to know themselves, and what they have done. Their past commerce with the Evil One, now seen in a clear retrospect, makes their very life to savour of the second death. It seems as if in their narrow soul there were a capacity to hold the undivided kingdom of darkness; and they gaze, in exceeding fear, at the depth of evil which stands open in their spiritual nature. Impure imaginations still sear them, evil thoughts still haunt their hearts: even in the purest actions, the most retired employments, the holiest seasons, a consciousness of what they have been; of the death in which they walked blindfold; of the soils

and characters which are still branded on them, make them to break away from themselves, and to cast themselves upon Him who at His coming "shall change our vile body that it may be like unto his glorious body." Awful as that day must be, it will bring deliverance from a torment which has no other alleviation. Much as they fear the eye of the Holy One, they fear more the defilement of the soul. One fear makes the other to pass into longing: and they learn to love that, from which, as they love it, they perpetually shrink with dread.

This is also true of the holiest, and the more so in the measure in which they are holier. As they learn by chastened experience the dreadful secrets of the fall in others and in themselves, the presence of the original taint in all the sphere of their spiritual nature, the subtle stimulants of the fallen world around them; so they learn that the misery of man is in himself; in the mystery of his own fearful and wonderful being, once in harmony with itself and with God, now darkened, soiled and biassed. The consciousness of sin dwelling in them, and its vivid response to outward provocations and allurements; and the humbling sense that they are susceptible of all temptations, these things make them long for the day of perfect redemption. In all their nearest

approaches to God, in works of charity, in alms-deeds, in acts of consolation, in prayer and secret abasement, in the worship of the Church, even at the foot of the altar, they bear about with them the burden and the consciousness of that which afflicts them while they abhor it. Though crucified and kept under by the Spirit of grace, yet it is still there reminding them that they are fallen and imperfect: that so long as they are in the body, they must bear the yoke of their humiliation. And though they are willing to bear it still as a salutary affliction, to chasten and to purify them for the day of His coming: nevertheless, in this body they "groan being burdened, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with the house which is from Heaven." There is nothing they desire with so intense a longing as to be made whole in the kingdom of the regeneration, to be without sin in that day "when the Son of Man shall sit upon the throne of His glory:" and in awe and trembling they learn to love the day which shall purge them of all stains, and make them as the angels of God.

Again, we cannot love the day of Christ, except we be dead to this world. Until we have learned its dangers and deceits, its falsehood and emptiness, we have got but a little way in preparing for Christ's coming. To love it is impossible.



There is nothing in Holy Scripture more emphatic than warnings against the world; and that not only against the positive evils, and defilements of it, but against the snares and dangers which beset even things lawful in themselves. Our Lord said of His elect, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world<sup>a</sup>." It is plain that this meant more than a freedom from its impurities. It expresses that peculiar habit and state of mind in which His true servants hold themselves aloof from the fears and hopes, cares and anxieties, burdens and gifts of this secular state. "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier;" i. e. they who are followers of the cross have a free and clear discharge from all other service; they are willing to be full or to suffer want, to have and to hold all things just so far as shall most accord with the hope of attaining to the resurrection of the dead.

And with this detachment from all secular things, there arises a profound desire to be finally delivered from them all; an unutterable weariness of the falsehood and turmoil of the world, a weariness—not the sickly fancy of impatient minds, nor the repining of a disobedient, selfish, discontented spirit, that morbid egotism which

<sup>a</sup> St. John xvii. 14.

besets the most secular of worldly men—but a high grace which none possess but those that have given themselves to “spend and be spent” for His sake. A true and pure desire to be free from the conditions of this mortal life, is always combined with the highest and most active devotion to God’s service, with a large and fervent charity, and with self-denial for the sake of the elect. Without these we may well fear lest we deceive ourselves. No man can be truly dead to this world until his affections are quickened and concentrated in the world beyond the grave. It is this perception of the realities of God’s kingdom, that teaches him to withdraw his affections from this dazzling and changeful vision with its vanities and pomps. He sees that, under all its bright array, it is full of perturbations: that its conflicts, changes, contradictions, are heavy to bear: its fairest things frail and fleeting. He shrinks from its cumbrous favours, its uncertain blessings, its doubtful tenures. He sees things that promised brightly end in clouds, and things that looked most lasting “crushed before the moth.” He finds little rest: no full quiescence of heart. It is this deep sense of the nothingness of the world that has taught not only to Apostles and Martyrs, but to all the elect of God, the lesson of entire deadness;

in whatsoever path or state of life ; in courts and camps ; in busy marts, or learned schools ; princes, soldiers, wise men, the highborn and the honoured, merchants, and traffickers of the earth, the unlettered, and the lowly, they have caught the strains of another world, and all the charming of this world are to them grating and powerless. They refuse to hear, charm it never so wisely. Their longing is for “the restitution of all things ;” when all things shall be reduced to harmony, and ordered in their original perfection : when there shall no more be either death or sin, and all the creatures of God shall once more be faultless and everlasting. Their portion is in the world beyond the grave ; and they choose rather to wait for the bliss which fadeth not away, than to make trial of a state whose best things must “perish in the using.” What they are seeking is a reality, which every year may grow more real, and pass onward into the world which is eternal.

It is this that makes them choose to wait wholly upon God, whether in the sacred or secular state, with perfect devotion, because that alone is a reality which shall outlast the shadows and changes of time. When all else is passed away, their great choice shall still advance to its perfection ; the service of God, the worship of the Eternal, here under a veil, and through symbols

and sacraments, and in imperfect acts of homage, in chants, and prayers, in works of mercy and of repentance in the fellowship of penitents and mourners, shall there pass into the adoration which goes up before the throne, out of the midst of which came lightnings and thunderings and voices, by direct intuition, beatific vision, unwearied homage day and night with the companies of the blessed, saints, angels, archangels, spirits of knowledge and of love, in the glory of His everlasting kingdom.

And once more, this love of His appearing is the direct and natural effect of love to Christ Himself. Otherwise it is hard to say how any man should love His coming. And this love is not a distant awe, or scrupulous reverence, or a cold keeping of His literal commandments; but the same vivid affection of our nature, purified and raised to embrace Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. They who have attained to this high grace wait for Him as we wait for one in whom all our happiness is centred; as we look out for the coming of some friend whom we love greatly. We know how in times of expectation their image is always in our thoughts: whatsoever we are saying or doing, it is ever in our mind: it passes before our eyes, and mingles in the work that lies before us: their tones



and words, almost their very footfall, are in our ear. It is a second consciousness, so that we feel the more alone till they come back ; though there be many with us, yet the friend we wish for is not there, and it is as if there were no one : as the days pass we reckon them up, at last the hours ; and our eager hope imagines to itself the signs and sounds of their arrival ; and we look out incessantly, and hasten forth again and again to meet them before they are come indeed ; this is but a faint expression of their earnest, and importunate longing, who wait for Christ's appearing. Through long years of repentance and discipline, it may be from earliest childhood, they have heard and spoken, read and pondered of Him with an awe which drew their affections to Himself. They have tasted of His goodness in blessings and chastisements, in guidance and in safety ; in manifold temptations, in solace, in reproofs. They have realized His continual presence and control in all the passages and windings of their past life. They are glad when they receive fresh tokens of His nearness to them, albeit in visitations of rebuke : year by year they have grown familiar with Him, and have learned to know His voice, and to love its accents even though they sometimes fall sharply on the ear. It is their peace to believe that all things are dis-

posed by Him ; that all the earth is full of the signs of His coming, that the fig-tree is putting forth its leaves : and the more emphatic these become the more do they tremble yet rejoice. They can without fear speak one to another of the visitation in the time of the end : the strife of nations : “ famines and pestilence, and fearful sights, and great signs from Heaven :” “ distress of nations with perplexity : the sea and the waves roaring : men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth.” They are looking out for the last tokens, false Christs and false prophets deceiving almost the elect ; iniquity abounding, love waxing cold, faith all but extinct : the hiding of the Church’s light : the sharp sword issuing from His mouth : and in all the earth the profound non-expectation of His coming, whereby we know that the day of the Son of Man is at hand. All these signs of fear to them carry no personal alarm : they know in Whose hand are all these conflicting powers, and Whose coming they bespeak. They know too that they are on His side : and that their “ redemption draweth nigh.”

But there are, perhaps, few of us who can think of that day without alarm. The warnings of our Lord fill us with a sense of fear. For

instance, what are our true feelings when we read such words as "Of that day and hour knoweth no man: no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. Then shall two be in the field, the one shall be taken and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken and the other left. Watch, therefore, for ye know not what hour our Lord doth come<sup>b</sup>." Do we not feel a thrill as we read "Ye shall look on me whom ye have pierced." Which prevails in us, love or fear, desire or shrinking? If it be fear, need we go far for the reason? Is it only because the day of His coming is awful in itself? Is it not rather that in ourselves there is something with which we fear to meet His eye? Is it not that there is in us some sin still unmortified, or still unrepented? that though we be seemingly changed we are not truly penitent? that we are conscious of some cherished evil either of the flesh or of the spirit—pride, or lust, wrath, envy, or sloth, something that

<sup>b</sup> St. Matt. xxiv. 36—41.

makes us fear when we read "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy<sup>c</sup>?" For at that day we shall each one for ever be what we shall then be found: our actual state will be fixed by His word and be made eternal. We shall then hear Him say, "He that is unjust let him be unjust still, and he that is filthy let him be filthy still." Wherefore: "take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth:" even on the most prepared: though they shall be always ready in habitual purity. But on those who are morally unprepared all the forerunning signs will fall in vain. The same permitted sin, be it one only, which makes men shrink at the thought of Christ's coming, will hinder them also from perceiving the warnings of His approach. They will class them with the ordinary phenomena of the natural world, or of political states, or of religious probation, and will explain away, as common and unmeaning events, the tokens which shew that He is at the very doors.

Or again, if we fear, it is because there are in us some inordinate desires, some still unchastened

<sup>c</sup> 1 Cor. iii. 17.



longings, something at variance with the self-denial of the cross, something not dead to the world. It may be that it is in itself a lawful matter : some schemes we desire to accomplish : some position to be won. We are hankering, perhaps, after questionable happiness ; or we have some lofty aims, some self-exalting imaginations. The kingdoms of the world and the glory of them are somehow still a lure to us. We have not fulfilled the renunciation of our baptism. We are perhaps of too buoyant a heart : or too full of life. We do not penetrate deep enough into the realities of the Spirit. The lawful callings, or the happiness of this earthly state, have too much hold upon us. We cannot attain to St. Paul's precept, " Brethren, the time is short : it remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none ; and they that weep, as though they wept not ; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not ; and they that buy, as though they possessed not ; and they that use this world, as not abusing it<sup>d</sup>." This is the cause of most of our shrinking. Perhaps after all we do in secret love the world : its purer forms are too attractive : it is still too fair, and soft, and pleasant to us : and that day would cut short our joys, and spoil us of our innocent pleasures. It would be a great wrench to give them up ; to

<sup>d</sup> 1 Cor. vii. 29—31.

leave behind what we cling so fast to. Our convictions urge us onward, but our affections hang continually back. The bliss of the eternal world, and of those that wait for it, is too severe and high for us. Still we go on thinking that, when some cherished purpose is fulfilled, we shall then, after that, forsake all and make ourselves clear and disentangled of the world to wait for His coming. And yet, after all, what is this but only a subtler insinuation of "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," of that love with which the love of the Father will not dwell? something that ought to be dead within us still living? If he that said "suffer me first to go and bury my father," received of the Lord an answer of so stern a sound, what shall we hear when He comes to judge the world?

And lastly, it is perfect love alone that "casteth out fear." The love of His unseen presence now, is the true and all-comprehending discipline to prepare us for the coming of our Lord. This is the cause why we have more fear than love of that day, because our love to Him is but a faint affection, a love rather of the reason than of the heart, of the conscience than of the soul. We picture to ourselves His presence by the imagination rather than apprehend it by faith. Our thoughts of Him are as thoughts of a pure heavenly intel-

ligence, rather than of a Divine Person encompassed with our nature, perfect in sympathy, overflowing with love.

For the most part ours is a loveless faith. Is it not already come to pass according as it is written, "Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold?" Surely of this our infrequent prayers, our constrained communions, our poor works of mercy, our slender and cheap self-denials, our spiritual sloth, bear too sure a witness. How is it that these things are at all times irksome to some, sometimes to all? Which of us can say, "I have fought a good fight?" How then can we say "there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness?" Nay, rather, how many among us shall hardly clear ourselves from the Apostle's sentence, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha."

Wherefore let us make ready while there is yet time: while the night yet wears on, and the day still tarries. Let us so live as we would desire to be found by Him at His appearing. Let us forsake all things of this world so far as the liberty which God gives to each of us allows: counting them happy that are freest from its trammels, most dead to its allurements,—attending on the Lord without distraction. A few short years,

and where shall be all those things we are now so eager about? Where shall be all our anxious studies and busy schemes, our toils and theories, our forecastings, designs, and strong contentions: our waking and watching, our sorrows and joys, our losses and successes? What shall popularity, or learning, or rank, or elevation, or worldly power then profit us? Where will be all our future aims when the white cloud shall be seen in heaven, and we shall be cited before the righteous Judge? Better, far better, to bear now "in the body the marks of the Lord Jesus," that we may be arrayed then in white raiment, than to be full of the gifts of this life, to be served and worshipped by the world, and at that day to stand before His piercing eyes, naked and defiled, and all men see our shame.





## SERMON VI.

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THE BEATIFIC VISION.  
Feast of St. Philip and St. James, 1844.

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ST. MATTHEW v. 8.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

IN joining the two Apostles, St. Philip and St. James, in one act of commemoration, the Church seems to suggest to our thoughts the deep and living unity by which all the servants and saints of Christ are knit together. Howsoever different they were in character and life, in the acts and events of it, in the powers and gifts bestowed upon them, they were still one in Him to whom they are now united; St. Philip, the Apostle and Missionary, the converter of nations, the founder of Gentile Churches; St. James, the Apostle and Bishop, sitting in his spiritual throne, fixed, and stedfast, in the Holy City, ruling the Israel of God. The fruit of St. Philip's preaching has its record only in the

living traditions of Christendom: the episcopate of St. James has also its memorial in the written canon of Holy Scripture. God deals in a manifold and wonderful way with His elect servants, and yet in all their diversities makes them vitally one; in the same divine commission, the same devoted toil for His elect, the same thirsting after God, the same crown of martyrdom, the same vision of God in glory.

In the few and scattered notices of St. Philip, whom we to-day commemorate, there is a saying which leads us especially to connect his name with the hope of the beatific vision. Our blessed Lord, in that last night of His humiliation, said to His disciples, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me. If ye had known me ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye both know him, and have seen him." And these words did but kindle the very yearnings and perplexed desires which they should have allayed. "Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou, then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me<sup>a</sup>?"

<sup>a</sup> St. John xiv. 6—10.

Now in these words St. Philip gave utterance to the craving which has burned in the heart of patriarchs, prophets, and saints in all ages of the world. He is almost a type of the Church of old in its dim desires after the vision of God, and of the thirst which has been felt above all by the Church of the regeneration. There has been in all God's true servants a consciousness that nothing but God alone could give rest to their souls: that they were made for Him, and that without Him their being was but a fragment, a painful mutilated life: that their capacities of knowledge, love, and bliss, were too large to be filled by creatures, that the hiding of the only sufficing uncreated One is the source of all sorrow, and the cause of all restless want. It is this that has kindled their whole inner life into a passionate longing after God. To see Him was the insatiate desire of Moses in the mount, when he said, "I beseech thee shew me thy glory." And he said, thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me and live. And the Lord said, Behold there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: and it shall come to pass while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with mine hand, while I pass by: and I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt



see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen<sup>b</sup>." It was the very breathing of David's life; "Like as the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God: my soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" It was the ecstatic vision of Isaiah; "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts<sup>c</sup>." It was the glory of Ezekiel's rapture; "above the firmament . . . was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it. And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about

<sup>b</sup> Exod. xxxiii. 18—23; xxiv. 9, 10.

<sup>c</sup> Isa. vi. 1—5.

within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward; and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord<sup>d</sup>." Again, "Then the Spirit took me up, and I heard behind me a voice of a great rushing, saying, Blessed be the glory of the Lord from his place. I heard also the noise of the wings of the living creatures that touched one another, and the noise of the wheels over against them, and a noise of a great rushing. So the Spirit lifted me up, and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; but the hand of the Lord was strong upon me<sup>e</sup>." It was the promised bliss of Simeon that he should see the Lord's Christ: "God manifest in the flesh." It was the gift bestowed upon the Apostles that they should see and converse with God, eat and drink, journey, and toil together with God in the mystery of His holy Incarnation. It was the peculiar favour bestowed upon St. Paul. "I knew a man in Christ about fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I cannot tell, or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth!), such an one caught up to the third heaven.

<sup>d</sup> Ezek. i. 26—28.

<sup>e</sup> Ezek. iii. 12—14.

And I knew such a man (whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth) how that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter<sup>f</sup>." In all these, by ecstasy and vision, by rapture and prophecy, by visible advent, by divine personality, by revelations of Paradise, the pure in heart did truly "see God." Peter and John, Andrew and Thomas, Philip and James, and Paul, though the last yet above all, did as truly see God as they beheld each other. For the Word had been made flesh and they had seen Him, and beheld His glory—"the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." "God was manifest in the flesh," and in His indivisible personality of both natures, by virtue of the Eternal Godhead, there was the presence both of the Father and of the Holy Ghost. "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." "I and my Father are one." He was "the brightness of his Father's glory, the express image of his person," "the image of the invisible God." "In him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily<sup>g</sup>."

Now what were all these but pledges and earnests of a bliss which is to come hereafter? Real

<sup>f</sup> 1 Cor. xii. 1—4. S. Thom. Aquin.; Summa Theol. 2<sup>da</sup> 2<sup>dae</sup> Quæst. 175. 6.

<sup>g</sup> St. John x. 30; Heb. i. 1; Col. i. 15. and ii. 9.

and high as was this fellowship with God, it was but the first manifestation of that glory which shall be revealed. It was the foretaste of this Beatitude; the inheritance of the pure in heart: a faint anticipation of that vision in bliss, which makes blessed all who behold it.

Let us then go on to consider, so far as we may, what is the nature of the beatific vision. It is plainly something that is yet to come. "The pure in heart *shall* see God." This was not finally fulfilled in the visions of seers, nor in the presence of Christ in the flesh, nor in any manifestation that has yet been made of God to His servants. Such beginnings, and first intuitions, as they may have had here in this life, did but lead on to the perfect sight of the Divine Presence. They were of old both fulfilments and prophecies, earnest and actual gifts, in part realities, and in part adumbrations, of that vision of God which shall be hereafter.

First, then, in the kingdom of heaven, the pure in heart of all ages, both before and since the Incarnation, shall see God in the person of Jesus Christ. They shall all be admitted to the same vision of "the Word made flesh," as His first followers beheld after the Resurrection. The promise to His servants is to "be with him where he is<sup>h</sup>," "to be ever with the Lord<sup>i</sup>:" "to

<sup>h</sup> St. John xvii. 24.

<sup>i</sup> 1 Thess. iv. 17.



be received unto himself, that where he is they may be also<sup>k</sup>.” “to see him as he is<sup>l</sup>.” Even in His Kingdom the Divine manhood of Jesus Christ will still be a direct and immediate revelation of God’s presence.

When He appeared after His resurrection, and the laws which govern our humanity had no longer power over Him, He was already clothed in an incorruptible and spiritual body. The veil which was upon His Divine nature seemed to be drawn so fine as to reveal some clearer and more piercing rays of the eternal Godhead. His most favoured Apostles met His presence with an awe too great for words. Their eyes were in part holden, and yet they saw more than they could utter. At the sea of Tiberias “none dared ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.” Again, in the mountain, when they saw Him, “they worshipped him, but some doubted:” as if from the excess of majesty, from some ineffable awe, some perplexed consciousness overwhelmed by the presence of their risen Lord. Doubtless in this there was somewhat of that loving worship and prostrate adoration, with which the pure in heart shall see Him in His kingdom. For at that day He will be seen, not in the subdued and attempered majesty in which He shewed Himself on earth even after His resurrection, but once more glori-

<sup>k</sup> St. John xiv. 3.

<sup>l</sup> St. John iii. 2.

fied "with the glory which he had with the Father before the world was." His very manhood arrayed with the uncreated light. The momentary unveiling of His glory in the mount of the transfiguration is a token of the splendour of that glorious body wherewith He is now exalted to the throne of God. And if in the days of His humiliation the passing emissions of His glory were so keen and bright, that "his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light<sup>m</sup>," what shall be the glory of His exaltation? When He appeared to Saul, it was in a light "above the brightness of the sun<sup>n</sup>:" when He came in vision to the beloved disciple, it was in a form of insupportable majesty, "clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace: and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength<sup>o</sup>." And again, "I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away,

<sup>m</sup> St. Matt. xvii. 2.

<sup>n</sup> Acts xxvi. 13.

<sup>o</sup> Rev. i. 13—16.

and there was found no place for them <sup>p</sup>.” And yet what are all these to the unimaginable glory which shall be revealed? We do but lower our own thoughts of it by subjecting them to any symbols or descriptions but those of the Spirit. Let thus much then suffice. They who attain to that life and the kingdom of the resurrection, shall see the Divine presence in the glorified manhood of Jesus Christ; the one eternal, invisible Godhead, unfolding the Divine glory, through the person of the Incarnate Word. In seeing Him, the pure in heart shall in very truth see God in the glory of His kingdom.

And yet it would appear that even this is rather the access to the Beatific Vision than the Beatific Vision itself. There is in Holy Scripture a revelation of the Divine presence besides the personal manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ. As when St. Stephen saw the heavens opened, “and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God:” and as where St. Paul ascribes the manifestation of Christ at His second coming to God, saying, “which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto: whom no man hath seen nor can see<sup>q</sup>.” And again, in the book of Revelation, St. John

<sup>p</sup> Rev. xx. 11.

<sup>q</sup> 1 Tim. vi. 15.

so describes the Divine presence as to include somewhat more than the vision of the person of the Word made flesh; and uses symbols which lead us back again to the visions of Ezekiel. "I was in the Spirit," he writes, "and behold a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon as a jasper and a sardine stone. And there was a rainbow round about the throne in sight like unto an emerald: . . . and out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God." . . . "And they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." And again, "I saw no temple there, for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof<sup>r</sup>." "And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded his fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree were for the

<sup>r</sup> Rev. iv. 2—8; xxi. 22, 23.



healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it: and his servants shall serve him; and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads, and there shall be no night there: and they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever<sup>s</sup>." Now whatsoever this sublime language of symbols may intend, and whatsoever glances there may be in it at the work of grace now in its progressive state, it cannot be denied, first, that it does ultimately shadow forth the bliss that is reserved for the saints; and next, such an unveiling of the Divine presence, as no man in this unpurged flesh and blood could see and live: such as we by virtue of our mystical unity and living incorporation with the second Adam, the Man Jesus Christ, shall, through Him, behold. And it is to this St. Paul seems to lead us when he says of Christ, that "he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet . . . And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all<sup>t</sup>:" that is to say, when sin and death are expelled from all the members of His mystical body; when the number of His elect is full, and

<sup>s</sup> Rev. xxii. 1—5.

<sup>t</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 25, 28.

the Church and Christ are united in one perfect body; then shall the mediatorial office of the kingdom of grace be at an end, and He shall receive His Saints into the kingdom of glory, and the new Creation be subject to the One, uncreated, undivided, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost<sup>u</sup>. This is the true Temple where they minister day and night before Him. This is the throne where "they shall see his face." And this seems to be the vision of bliss, in the rest of God, in the infinite intensity of the Divine presence, when the Word made flesh shall gather His mystical body, the elect, who, through the mystery of the incarnation, and by union with His person, shall receive power to behold the Divine Presence, as angels, archangels, thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, cherubin and seraphim behold it now.

Thus far we have considered the visible manifestations of the Divine presence as they have been exhibited<sup>x</sup>, or are promised to the sense of

<sup>u</sup> S. Greg. Nyss. Orat. in "Tunc ipse Filius subjicietur" &c. tom. ii. pp. 12—15. "Et ipsa visio est facie ad faciem, quæ summum præmium promittitur justis; et ipsa fiet, cum tradet regnum Deo et Patri; in quo et suæ formæ visionem vult intelligi, subjectâ Deo universâ creaturâ, et ipsâ in quâ Filius Dei filius hominis factus est." S. Aug. De Trinitate, lib. i. 13. tom. viii. p. 768.

<sup>x</sup> S. Chrysostom, after quoting Isaiah vi. 1, &c., Dan. vii. 9,

outward sight; but there would seem to be in this beatitude something deeper and still more intense. Throughout the words of Prophets and Apostles there are ever to be heard such warnings and checks as these, “The Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude, only ye heard a voice<sup>y</sup>.” Again, “There shall no man see me and live.” Again, “We shall surely die because we have seen God.” Again, “No man hath seen God at any time.” Again, “whom no man hath seen nor can see<sup>z</sup>.”

There seems to be no truth more broadly written in Holy Scripture than the invisibleness of the uncreated God. It seems to be the highest contradiction of His infinity of Being to use any such terms as imply circumscription, figure, locality, or to subject the Divine presence to the conditions of manifestation which appear to be necessary for the corporeal vision of His creatures,

Exod. xxxiii. 13, adds, *καὶ ἕτεροι αὐτὸν ἐώρακασιν. Πῶς οὖν ὁ Ἰωάννης εἶπε, Θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακε πώποτε; δηλῶν ὅτι πάντα ἐκεῖνα συγκαταβάσεως ἦν οὐκ αὐτῆς τῆς οὐσίας γυμνῆς ὄψις· εἰ γὰρ αὐτὴν ἑώρων τὴν φύσιν οὐκ ἂν διαφόρως αὐτὴν ἐθεάσαντο· ἀπλῆ γάρ τις καὶ ἀσχημάτιστος αὐτῆ, καὶ ἀσύνθετος, καὶ ἀπερίγραφτος. In Joannem, Hom. xv. tom. viii. p. 85.*

<sup>y</sup> Deut. iv. 12.

<sup>z</sup> Exod. xxxiii. 20; Judges xiii. 22; St. John iv. 12; 1 Tim. vi.

Nevertheless, we read also in St. Paul's writings, "now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face." And in the book of Revelations, "and they shall see his face."

Now these words of the One Spirit must have some true and deep agreement, howsoever in letter and in sound they may seem opposed. And into this it is not unlawful for us to enter, so that we speak of such inscrutable mysteries without rash words, or vain and prying thoughts: using "rather efficacious affections of the will, than curious discourses of the understanding."

It seems evident, then, that the words of Moses, St. John, and St. Paul, are to be understood first of the impossibility of our seeing God so long as we are in this mortal and sinful state; and next of the vision of bodily sight.

But it would also appear from all the revelations of truth that, as the final bliss of man consists in the highest exercise of his nature upon the highest object of its knowledge and love, they who are made perfect will in some way "see him as he is." For otherwise how should the saints be in perfect blessedness? It would then seem either that they should never attain to that perfection, or that their vision must fall short of God, and terminate in some other below



Him; both which suppositions are alike contrary to the Divine Word of promise<sup>a</sup>.

But it does not therefore follow, that such a vision of God should in any way imply the impossible notion of a circumscribed or limited figure, nor that He should, in His pure essence, be the object of our bodily sight even in the state of glory. In His very and true being, if we may reverently speak of things so high and awful, without doubt God is unseen by any direct gaze except His own<sup>b</sup>: for what other gaze is infinite? Not even angels nor seraphim, we may believe, behold, under any finite, or comprehensible figure, form, or idea, the very and uncreated Godhead<sup>c</sup>. Those purer intelligences behold Him now less by gazing than by living in Him. Their vision is by union of their pure spirits with His kindred nature. And so, it would seem, it will be with His saints. For what inferior

<sup>a</sup> “Cum enim ultima hominis beatitudo in altissimâ ejus operatione consistat, quæ est operatio intellectûs, si nunquam essentiam Dei videre potest intellectus creatus, vel nunquam beatitudinem obtinebit, vel in alio ejus beatitudo consistet, quam in Deo, quod est alienum a fide.” S. Thom. Aquin., Summa Theolog., P. I. Quæst. xii. art. i.

<sup>b</sup> S. Chrys. in Joan. Hom. xv. tom. viii. p. 85. “Μόνος οὖν αὐτὸν ὁρᾷ ὁ υἱὸς καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον. ἡ γὰρ κτιστὴ φύσις ἅπαντα πῶς καὶ ἰδεῖν δυνήσεται τὸν ἄκτιστον;”

<sup>c</sup> S. Chrysost. *ibid*: S. Dionys. Areop. de Divinis Nom. c. i. § 5.

similitude could body forth the supreme<sup>d</sup>: or what created form could express the infinite Creator? To the eyes of the spiritual body, indeed, the presence and energy of the ever-blessed Trinity<sup>e</sup> may be exhibited by heavenly tokens, and by a circumstantial glory: by a sublime array of ineffable symbols, as in the Apocalyptic visions, by the harmony of splendours and lights, by the outlines of perfect forms, and by the unity of the celestial world<sup>f</sup>; but into the brightness which is dark from excess of glory, it would still appear that no eye of sense<sup>g</sup>, outward or inward, neither that which beholds outwardly, nor that which pictures its vision inwardly upon itself, may ever penetrate.

It remains, then, that we look for some other power of vision higher than sight or imagination,

<sup>d</sup> S. Thom. Aquin., Summa Theol., Quæst. xii. art. ii.

<sup>e</sup> S. Greg. Nyssen, de Vitâ S. Ephræm, tom. iii. 616. S. Greg. Naz., Orat. xliii. tom. i. 833. “συνεποπτεύοντες τὴν ἁγίαν καὶ μακαρίαν Τριάδα καθαρώτερόντε καὶ τελεώτερον, ἧς νῦν μετρίως δεδέγμεθα τὰς ἐμφάσεις :

<sup>f</sup> S. Thom. Aquin., S. T., Quæst. xii. art. iii.

<sup>g</sup> “Impossibile est Deum videri *sensu visus*, vel quocunque alio *sensu* aut potentia sensitivæ partis. Omnis enim potentia hujusmodi est actus corporalis organi. . . Actus autem proportionatur ei, cujus est actus. Unde nulla hujusmodi potentia potest se extendere ultra corporalia. Deus autem incorporeus est. . . Unde nec *sensu*, nec imaginatione videri potest, sed solo intellectu.” S. Thom. Aquin., *ibid.*

somewhat more sublime and heavenly, subject to none of the laws and limits of corporeal organization<sup>h</sup>. And this our Lord seems here to teach us when He says, "the pure in heart shall see God:" it would seem that the true vision of Him is spiritual, by a more direct and interior power of intuition fixed upon the presence of God revealed in the very persons of the blessed; that His image shall be seen not by

<sup>h</sup> "Quod autem non imaginaliter, sed proprie videtur, et non per corpus videtur, hoc eâ visione videtur quæ omnes cæteras superat. . . .

"Hæc sunt tria genera visionum . . . . Primum ergo appellemus corporale, quia per corpus percipitur, et corporis sensibus exhibetur. Secundum spiritale, quidquid enim corpus non est, et tamen aliquid est, jam recte spiritus dicitur; et utique non est corpus, quamvis corpori similis sit, imago absentis corporis, nec ille ipse obtutus quo cernitur. Tertium vero intellectuale, ab intellectu . . . .

"Quapropter si hoc tertium visionis genus, quod superius est, non solum omni corporali, quo per corporis sensus corpora sentiuntur, verum etiam omni illo spiritali, quo similitudines corporum spiritu et non mente cernuntur, tertium cœlum appellavit Apostolus; in hoc videtur claritas Dei, cui videndæ corda mundantur, unde dictum est, 'Beati mundo corde, quia ipsi Deum videbunt: non per aliquam corporaliter vel spiritaliter figuratam significationem tanquam per speculum in ænigmate, sed facie ad faciem, quod de Moyse dictum est, 'os ad os;' per speciem scilicet, qua est Deus quidquid est, quantumcunque eum mens, quæ non est quod ipse, etiam ab omni terrena labe mundata, et ab omni corpore et similitudine corporis alienata et abrepta capere potest." S. Aug. De Genesi, lib. xii. §§ 6, 7 and 28. tom. iii. pars i. p. 302.

outward vision, fixed on the similitude of any form, but by reflection, by participation of His likeness in knowledge, will, love, holiness in themselves<sup>i</sup>: by a divine consciousness which is the bliss of those who are made partakers of the divine nature: *θείας κοινωνοὶ φύσεως*<sup>k</sup>. And this is the most true and perfect sight: for, manifold as are the objects and the modes of perception, the power of vision is one and indivisible. It does not originate in the body, but in the living spirit: it does not terminate in the bodily organization, but in the spiritual percipient: it is hardly more an act than a consciousness: so that the beholding of created and sensible things is but a mediate and outward consciousness, and the contemplation of the image of the uncreated God in

<sup>i</sup> “Manifestum est autem, quod Deus et est auctor intellectivæ virtutis, et ab intellectu videri potest. Et cum ipsa intellectiva virtus creaturæ non sit Dei essentia, relinquitur quod sit aliqua participativa similitudo ipsius, qui est primus intellectus. . . . Requiritur ergo ad videndum Deum aliqua Dei similitudo, . . . Dicendum ergo, quod ad videndum Dei essentiam requiritur aliqua similitudo ex parte visivæ potentiæ, scilicet lumen Divinæ gloriæ confortans intellectum ad videndum Deum, de quo dicitur in Psal. 35, ‘In lumine tuo videbimus lumen.’ Non autem per aliquam similitudinem creatam Dei essentia videri potest, quæ ipsam divinam essentiam representet ut in se est.” S. Thom. Aquin., Summa Theol., P. I. Quæst. xii. art. ii. S. Greg. Nyssen, De Beatitud., Orat. vi. tom. iii. p. 816.

<sup>k</sup> 2 St. Pet. i. 4.



purity of heart, an immediate and inward sight—a sight more perfect, direct, and true, than any external vision by instruments and organs. It would therefore seem that the sight which the perfect shall enjoy in heaven, various as it is, will be all one perception; the heavenly court, the celestial hierarchy, the holiness of saints, the glorified manhood of the second Adam, the image of God, all one complex of brightness and of bliss, seen and tasted by one consciousness of the perfect Spirit: that our whole nature shall see God, by all its faculties and powers, which shall have all their proper objects, each according to its capacity, not in succession as in this imperfect state, but by one everlasting act of the pure in heart.

Now if this be the end and reward of the saints hereafter, it would seem to follow that they are truly made partakers of it, in kind and in earnest, now. For without this there can be no true rest or bliss: and the perception of these is through purity of heart, which is to be sought and attained in this imperfect state. The presence of God is the fountain of beatitude to all His servants, in all conditions and approximations to His kingdom.

The rest and bliss of the Church unseen, of patriarchs, prophets, and saints now departed, is

a participation in measure of that which they shall hereafter receive in fulness. What partial veiling of the final glory there may now be, while the bodies of the saints are yet asleep; what higher and deeper measures and capacities to receive the bliss of heaven may be given with the spiritual and glorious body; what fuller emissions of the Divine light shall be seen in the nearer access which they shall obtain after the resurrection; we must wait to learn through His grace at His coming and His kingdom.

But this one truth seems clear and necessary, that there can be but one source of bliss, which is God alone, and but one perception of that bliss, which is by purity of heart. It would seem to be one and the same in all orders of created spirits, from the highest seraphim to the lowest saint beneath the feet of His elect.

And from this it follows again, that the spiritual vision of God, which the pure in heart enjoy in this mortal and humbled state, must be the very same act related to the same object, wanting only the circumstantials of its perfect manifestation in heaven, and the conditions of perfect purity in our hearts to behold it. The object of vision and love there, is the object of faith and love here. It is one, changeless and eternal, being God Himself. And therefore we even now speak of *seeing*

God by faith, by the light of knowledge, and by the exercise of the contemplative and intellectual powers ; but there is, even in this life, that same and still higher perception of His presence which is spiritual, including all other ways of perceiving, and that is by the sustained and habitual consciousness which holy minds possess of His nearness, and the inward impressions they have of His truth and love. This is the communion with God which the devout and contemplative enjoy. It is something to be tasted rather than to be talked of ; to be learned by experience rather than defined by terms. But that it is no mere imagination, but a true and divine reality, is manifest from the words of our Lord Himself. When He went away into heaven, He pledged His continual presence to His faithful. “ I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you<sup>1</sup>.” “ Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” And that by a true and personal presence of the Word incarnate. “ Behold I stand at the door and knock ; if any man will hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me<sup>m</sup>.” Again, He promised not His own personal presence alone, but also that of the Father, and of the Holy Ghost, of the ever-blessed Trinity, three Persons in one God. “ If a man love me, he will

<sup>1</sup> St. John xiv. 18.

<sup>m</sup> Rev. iii. 20.

keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Again, "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." And again He said, of "the Comforter which is the Holy Ghost<sup>n</sup>," "He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." In these promises we see a further presence of God with His elect, a presence of three Divine Persons, a manifestation of Himself through the Spirit to the inward sight of the pure in heart, a true vision of God from which the light of truth and peace, and we know not what communication of the things of Christ, is shed abroad in the heart. In prophets, apostles, and seers, this is the source of fore-knowledge and inspiration; in us, of that spiritual light which is common to all saints. As there is but one principle of visible light, one source, one radiance, one perception; so it is in the vision of God in heaven and in earth, in angels and saints, in those that are at rest, and in us that are still in the body of this death.

From all this it follows, that there is even in this life an illumination of those that are pure in heart, which is not to be explained by the common processes of sight and knowledge. I say, is not to be explained by them; for I do not mean which is independent of the conditions to

<sup>n</sup> St. John xiv. 18.



which our nature subjects us, or of the means which God has ordained for us to use in searching after truth. This in theory would be mere fanaticism : and, in fact, none in the history of the Church have ever exhibited such laborious fidelity in all discipline of the heart and reason, as those who have received and again reflected the greatest supernatural lights. Great as the knowledge is that some men, void of God's presence, have attained in natural, and human, and even revealed truths, yet there is something perceptibly wanting in them. They amaze us with the light of their speculations, and then astonish us with a purblind ignorance of some self-evident, and vital axiom of truth. There is evidently some stupendous breach in their intellectual system, some want of continuity in its perceptions, or some faculty related to particular kinds of truth wholly wanting. And that is in fact the true solution. But in those who have attained to this spiritual knowledge, there is a perception of first truths, of universal principles, axioms of the life that is in us, discernment of moral qualities, of fine distinctions, intuitions into character, anticipations of events yet to come, with a clearness, a depth of insight, a light and illumination of the conscience, reason, and soul, which none have ever attained but the pure in heart. And what is all this but

an endowment nearly related to the perception of the Divine Presence in themselves ?

The same may be seen also in looking at the contrary fact, namely, that the most powerful men, by forfeiting their higher illumination, often relapse into most melancholy and sometimes total obscuration of intellectual light. An impure, that is, a double heart, or a heart that is unclean and sensual, or heavy with sloth and surfeit, so deadens the perception of the Divine Presence in the world, in Providence, in the Church, in Holy Sacraments, in all consecrated actions, that the soul becomes overcast and dark. The powers of the reason lose their precision, the judgment warps and distracts the whole process of thinking and believing. A profligate life will imbrute even the highest intellectual gifts. The source of heresy is an impure heart. The unclean at first will not, and at last cannot, see God in His word or in His works. There grows up a fearful unconsciousness of moral probation, and of the relation between sanctity and truth. The whole conflict of truth and falsehood in the world has had side by side with it a like conflict of purity and impurity ; of those that see God and those that see Him not. What else is the warfare of the Church against the world ; of faith against heresies ; of the schools of the prophets against the

schools of the disputers of this world? It will all be found traceable at last to one great principle, the relation of sanctity and truth. The science of the saints begins in the spiritual powers, and is learned of God. It is a science "which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory," which the world, since His passion, never has known nor ever will know; for it is the gift of that Divine Presence "which the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him." And hence come all jangling and contentious theologies, divisions of doctrine, and crucifixion of the Truth. Christendom itself has, at times, become a mystical Calvary, because the impure in heart have for a while possessed the earth.

This spiritual knowledge, then, is the avenue to the vision of God, or rather the first radiance of it, meeting us in our approaches to Him—the first light of His countenance upon the inward sight of His saints. And it is impossible to limit the intuitions of those who so behold Him. They have an insight into the foundations of truth which definitions cannot express: ideas of the spirit broader than the articulations of speech. And yet none have so inflexibly witnessed and suffered for the doctrines of faith, and for the

traditions of the Church, as they whose illumination seemed to overflow the boundaries of doctrinal forms, and the limitations of creeds and dogmas. What does the light talking of superficial men against the dogmatic teaching of the Church prove, but the absence of that higher and larger light in which the nature of language, and its relation to the perfection of truth, and the imperfections of the human mind, are perceived and measured?

Another principle we may learn from what has been said is, that the way to all knowledge or vision of truth is by seeking first the purities of God's presence. All processes of the intellect, all the laws of dialectics and of philosophy, are subject to that first philosophy which is the science of God. This is the foundation of the schools which the Church has reared. The Faith is their charter and their very life; and the Faith is the virtue of purification. In nothing does the Church more directly front and contradict the wisdom of the world, than in the whole principle and order of her divine and true philosophy. In the eyes of the world, to seek knowledge by humiliations, fastings, alms-deeds, charity, daily prayers, devout communion, is a folly and a provocation. They see no relation between such premises and the conclusions of truth. It is a logic the conditions of



which they have not hearts to understand. And yet there is no fact in science proved by observation and experiment so ample and precise as this, that the greatest teachers of mankind have learned more truth upon their bended knees, and at the foot of the altar, than in the books and schools of science; that the gifts of piercing intellectual force, of irresistible subtilty, elevated contemplation, discernment beyond the keenness of common understanding, direct insight, analytical penetration, energy, comprehension, unity of powers, have been the peculiar and characteristic marks of those who sought all truth in sanctity, and beheld all things in the light of God. And those most full of light have been also the chastest, meekest, lowliest of men. This is the witness of the whole Church of God, not in Apostles and seers, Bishops and pastors only, but in all the regenerate servants of Christ—princes, statesmen, schoolmen, doctors; men of science, speculation, action, enterprise: neither is it in the attainment of direct religious truth only, but of all truth: for all truth is in Him, and by Him all is bestowed upon mankind. There is but one and the same path to all secular knowledge, to all sciences of the world, of nature, of humanity. With equal, or even inferior powers, it is true in all, that the purest heart shall have most light. For such

minds are planted, as it were, at the point of sight from which all things, the most confused and entangled to other eyes, seem to marshal themselves, and to fall under their own principles. The ethical science of the ancient world, the moral condition of classical ages, the theologies of the East, the whole tradition of worship among mankind, the entire science of law, that is, of right and wrong, as it lies at the root of all civil society and the compacts of human life, all those truths which form the subject-matter of the study and probation of most men in the secular state, are to men of impure, or unilluminated hearts, full of doubt, probability, imperfection,—of abruptness, and seeming contradiction: and that simply because they have never ascended to the first idea of truth, which is to be seen in God alone. Let us then never think the subject-matter of our studies, or employments, to be so secular and remote from Him, as that we can enter upon it in our own light and strength. It is “the entrance of his word that giveth light,” and all light is from Him who “lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” This is emphatically true of men at the outset of life, when they are learning not the particular formulas and technicalities of a profession, but the ideas, and laws, which govern both the intellect of mankind and the matter which is

subject to his knowledge. The studies of an University, from their peculiar character as a broad primary discipline of the heart and reason, are of all studies most closely related to this first science of the Divine Spirit. The very faculties of the mind which are called into act and energy, are those which lie nearest to the spiritual life; I mean, the discernment of moral distinctions, of the qualities of evidence, and the force of obligation. It is peculiarly the discipline of man as man, not of men as they are limited and cramped by the forms and usages of particular callings. It is a discipline, the design of which is to enlarge the capacity of men for the reception and love of truth, as such. And what is that but the purification of the heart by truth that it may see God? *Ὁ δὲ τοιοῦτος ἀν εἶη βίος κρείττων ἢ κατὰ ἄνθρωπον· οὐ γὰρ ἦ ἄνθρωπός ἐστιν οὕτως βιώσεται, ἀλλ' ἦ θεῖόν τι ἐν αὐτῷ ὑπάρχει<sup>ο</sup>.*

If the lusts of the flesh and of the spirit, if vanity, pride, sloth, sensuality, unbelief, are deadly sins any where, certainly they are most deadly at the Altar, and in the schools of the Church. God's holy Name be praised, that in this place, the teacher's chair is still set within the precinct of the sanctuary, and the school of the learner is likewise the oratory of saints. While the universities of almost every other Chris-

<sup>ο</sup> Arist. Eth. Nicom. x. 7.

tian land, the celebrated schools of western Europe, the lights of the middle ages, the homes of saints and doctors, have wasted away or sunk under the false philosophies of these latter days, we are still spared in possession of our inheritance; and, if we be true to ourselves, shall preserve inviolate our charter still. From the Church we received it, and of the Church we must hold it as a trust: "The Lord is our light." And He alone knoweth what service He will yet take at our hands. Next to the Catholic Church sojourning in this land, there is no work of the Divine hand so majestic, and fruitful of saints, as our collegiate system. What a work of light and sanctity has been advancing here these thousand years: from what small beginnings, to how bold a stature, and with what hardy strength it has continued to witness with the witness of the Church its mother. Here the pure in heart have seen God, and bequeathed to us the heirloom of their rest and knowledge. What companies of saints of every state, lay and sacred, bishops, pastors, doctors, rulers, nobles, men holy and humble, wise and pure, have issued from these religious homes. Through what ages of rough eventful history it has held its light steadfast and even, forsaken only when it forsook itself.

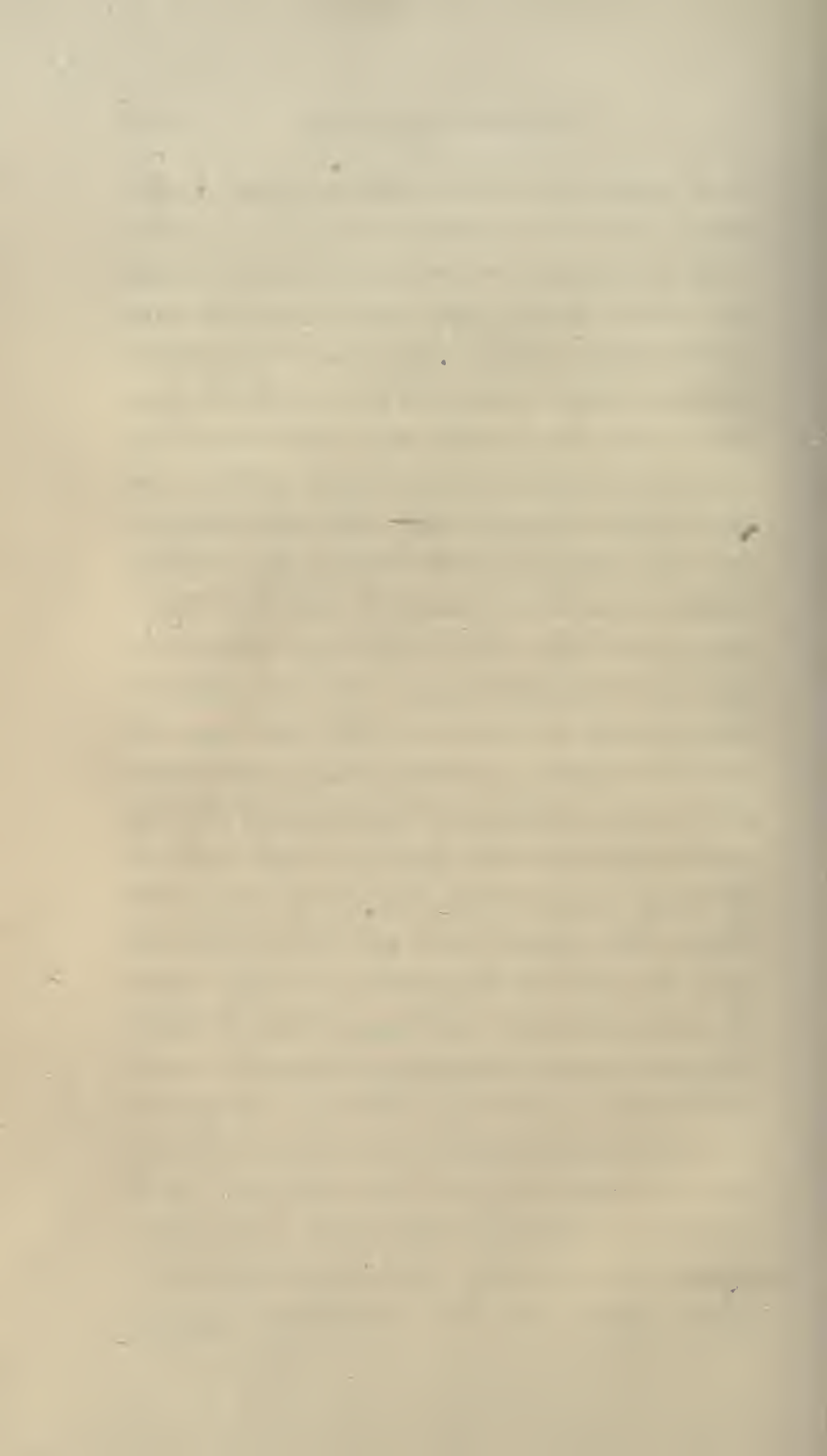
Surely if there be any admonition to be read,



clear as the writing of a man's hand, upon these walls, it is a warning how we, who are blessed with the inheritance of this favoured place, suffer to dwell in our hearts the impurity or insincerity which hides the vision of God. The very condition of our continuance is that we seek truth in purity, and thirst for the light which is the gift of God. Let us then, with all our strength, seek after "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Let us strive to be saints, that we may become students, scholars of the One Teacher. Let us not so spend ourselves in poring upon the letters of truth, that we come short of the vision of God. Let prayer, habitual contemplation, self-chastisement, patience, charity, self-denial, the subjugation of those tumultuous and worldly passions which trouble the clearness of the heart, be our first studies and our last. Lay deep the foundations of a holy life in purity and humility, while as yet the world and its rude trials are stayed back from buffeting you. The time will come when, in the turmoil and contamination of a busy life, you will desire to see one of these days of devout and sheltered communing with God, and shall not see it. If any live impurely here, what shall their life be, when the world has breathed its searching and noisome plagues upon them? "If they do these things

in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?"

Be this, then, our one end in life, to cleanse our hearts, that we may behold more and more of the beauty and the splendour of the Divine Presence : that we may see God in all His creatures ; in all His providence, in all the events and changes, the calls and chastisements of life ; in the light which shines out from His holy Word, in the " fire infolding itself " whereby He manifests to His elect His presence in His holy Sacraments, and above all in His image reflected in our own regenerate being ; that by purity of heart we may receive more of His presence, and by the revelation of truth within us, our souls may be more intimately cleansed, until the day come when faith shall pass into sight, and love be made perfect before the throne, where He liveth and reigneth, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, in glory equal, in majesty coeternal, the blessed Three, the Holy One, over all, blessed for ever. Amen.



## SERMON VII.

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THE GIFT OF ILLUMINATION.  
TRINITY SUNDAY, 1844.

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ST. JAMES i. 17.

“ Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.”

THE Feast of the Holy Trinity brings before us not only the mystery of the Divine nature, but also the economy or manner of the revelation by which God has been pleased to make Himself known to the world. It seems hardly more the design of the Church to bring before us, this day, the ineffable mystery of Three Divine Persons in One God, than to impress upon us the relation in which we stand to Him, and the laws which He has imposed upon our reason and our will. This is emphatically the Feast of awe, wonder, worship, and abasement—a day in which to adore God, not so much as He is manifested in the particular acts of His economy of grace, but throned “ in the light which no man can approach unto,” in the glory of His eternal rest.



St. James here reminds us of one of the simplest and highest laws of God's kingdom ; one so plain and familiar, that we are wont to turn our thoughts from it with a readiness nearly akin to impatience. But it involves in itself great and far-reaching consequences ; truths the highest and most subtile for the conduct of our reason, and precepts the most direct for the guidance of our life. He says there is no giver of good gifts but God alone,—all is from above ; all truth, grace, light, and life, are from Him “ the Father of lights,” of angels, spirits, intelligences in earth and heaven ; there is from Him a perpetual effluence of being, goodness, benediction. Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens, cannot contain His fulness ; earth is replenished with the overflow of the Divine love ; ever descending, without measure, still, deep, exhaustless. There is but One without beginning, the beginning of all ; unoriginate, uncreate, eternal, infinite, having no measure but His own will<sup>a</sup> ; the Maker, Quickener, Preserver of all things visible and invisible ; very light, goodness, life, essence ; above all being, but the Cause of all that are ; the Ordainer of all powers ; but, above all ; the fountain of life to all living, and of reason to all intelligence,—one Wisdom, Power, and Will.

And this leads back our thoughts naturally to the subject of this Festival. Of all the good and

<sup>a</sup> S. Joan. Damascen. De Fide orthodoxâ, viii.

perfect gifts of God, the chiefest, without controversy, is the knowledge of Himself. And this hath come down from the Father of lights with a most expressive order and unity of revelation. Four thousand years this great gift was in descending ; as if the capacity of the world were all too narrow to receive it at one effusion. The heavenly light steadily advanced upon mankind, flowing from one changeless point, without variableness or "shadow of turning." From the creation of the world to the descent of the Holy Ghost, there has been one measured, ever expanding revelation of Himself.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." "And God said, Let there be light<sup>b</sup>." The very act of creating was a revelation of God. The world became a record of "His Eternal Power and Godhead<sup>c</sup>." "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. One day telleth another, and one night certifieth another. There is neither speech nor language, but their voices are heard among them<sup>d</sup>." The laws and instincts of all creatures, both with and without life, became an universal witness, and perpetual tradition of God, coming down directly from Himself.

<sup>b</sup> Gen. i. 1, 2, 3.

<sup>c</sup> Rom. i. 20.

<sup>d</sup> Ps. xix. 1, 2.

And again: the economy of the Incarnation, or the new creation of the world, was a carrying out and perfecting of the revelation which was given in the first. It was a retouching of the same outline, and an unfolding of hidden mysteries into open light. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "All things were made by him: and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not." "That was the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not." But for this end, "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father<sup>e</sup>." The mystery of God's nature was revealed not so much by the words of the Son as by His Person; not so much by His teaching as by His coming into the world; by the act of His manifestation in the flesh. That for which the light of nature, and the visions of Prophets had been preparing, was come. The fulness of time was ripe: and the period had set in, after four thousand years of waiting, for another good and perfect gift,

<sup>e</sup> St. John i. 1—14.

another flood of illumination from the Father of lights. The fact of Christ's coming was a revelation in very deed that in the unseen Godhead there was a mystery of two coequal, coeternal Persons, the Father and the Son, related by an ineffable and everlasting generation, so that the Father was always, and the Son always; the Son never without the Father, nor the Father without the Son. And to fill up the measure of this perfect gift, the Holy Ghost, by His personal descent, revealed in visible act another and the third Divine coequal Person; the Son testified of the Father; the Spirit, of the Father and the Son; the Son sent of the Father, the Spirit proceeding from both, and sent by both. Such were the acts and witness of the new creation perfecting the old; and this good gift, the knowledge of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, by the ministry of the same Spirit, has been again recorded throughout the world. The whole Creation is written both within and without. By the gift of Inspiration to the Apostles, the voice of the regeneration was heard in all the earth. "The morning stars" of the new creation "sang together." "Their sound went out into all the earth, and their words into the ends of the world<sup>f</sup>." By the universal witness of the Apostles, by the grace of the new birth, by the simultaneous planting of the

<sup>f</sup> Rom. x. 18; Ps. xix. 4.



Catholic Church, by the world-wide tradition of the one Faith<sup>g</sup>, by the Holy Name in Baptism, by Confession, and Holy Scriptures, by doxologies and hymns learned from the worship of Angels and of Seraphim, the visions of Prophets came to pass—"the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea<sup>h</sup>." "From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, my Name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered to my Name, and a pure offering<sup>i</sup>." "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory<sup>k</sup>." The light of creation passed into the light of the Divine Word and Spirit: and in all the world there is the imperishable revelation of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; the Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier; the unity of love, wisdom, power: the Father made of none, neither created nor begotten: the Son, of the Father alone, neither made nor created, but begotten: the Holy Ghost, of the Father and of the Son, neither made nor created nor begotten, but proceeding: and this in one Godhead, simple, undivided, eternal.

This is the gift of truth which, by one continuous revelation, He has recorded for our learning.

<sup>g</sup> S. Iren. Adv. Hær. lib. i. c. x.

<sup>h</sup> Isaiah xi. 9.

<sup>i</sup> Malachi i. 11.

<sup>k</sup> Isaiah vi. 3.

It ceased not till all was given. By acts of His own He has written it in what may be called the universal ordinances, deposits, traditions of nature, and in the universal laws, instincts, energies of the Church: the manifold unity of creation, and the manifold unity of the Church, being a witness full and perfect, given from above, external to the reason of mankind, self-evident and steadfast, unto the end of the world.

From this then we see that all the knowledge we possess of the Divine Nature is the direct gift of God Himself. And let us duly weigh the consequence of this great fact, in its bearing upon all our knowledge of Divine truth. It is a type of the whole of our perceptions. We have all knowledge by a gift of God, by a succession of Divine acts, by reception, not by discovery. For although the knowledge of God be discoverable by the light of nature, yet that light was of God's giving; and though in Scripture the mystery of the Holy Trinity be fully contained, yet, as a fact, that doctrine was not deduced from it by proof and reasoning; but simply received together with Holy Scripture, and before it was written, from the preaching of Evangelists and Apostles.

From this we may learn :

First—That the most perfect knowledge of

Divine truth is that which we receive by the pas-  
sive perceptions of the reason. By the reason, I  
mean that power of intellectual sight whereby we  
see or perceive the ideas and relations of truth.  
By passive perception, is not intended a lifeless  
and inert condition of the mind, which is contra-  
dictory to the plain meaning of the word: for to  
perceive presupposes life, and the activity of liv-  
ing powers in the subject. The words passive  
perception may be used to express the act of per-  
ceiving such truths as discover themselves to us  
by their own light, as opposed to those percep-  
tions which are the consequence and conclusions  
of reasoning and investigation. It is not neces-  
sary to raise any question as to the kind or de-  
gree of light which may be in us by nature, in  
respect to particular truths. Whatsoever it be,  
it is still a gift passively received, to which we  
bring nothing but the simple capacity and con-  
sciousness of perceiving.

Men are so fond and ambitious of originating  
and discovering, that they will not easily believe  
the highest offices of the reason to be those that  
are most nearly passive; and the activity of in-  
quiry and proof to be a plain evidence of imper-  
fection either in the certainty of the object, or in  
the clearness of our own understanding. And  
yet what are the conditions of perfect knowledge

but certainty in the matter external to our minds, and clearness in the faculties by which we perceive it. In Divine things this certainty is the revelation of God. The only condition of perfect knowledge that remains to be secured is in ourselves, that is to say, the clearness of our own perceptions. And of these it will be found that those are the most perfect which are so simple as to be truly called passive.

This must be evident if we remember that the surest, clearest, and most steadfast of our perceptions are those which we call axioms, or primary laws, of truth, and right; of number, and quantity, and the like; which are not conclusions but intuitions, certainties without premises, issuing out of a consciousness which is as certain as life itself. For instance; personal identity, the voice of conscience, the being of a God, the force of right and truth, the existence of the external world, what higher certainties have we than these? and these did not follow but precede the process of investigation. It is needless to inquire what radical or seminal principles of these were in us at our birth. It is enough that they are universal in mankind; that they go before all reasoning, before all inquiry, judgment, inference: and that they are our highest forms of knowledge. And yet what perceptions



have less of volition, or are more passive than these ?

Again, what is the result of reasoning the most elaborate and exact, but to arrive at conclusions which may be referred at last to their first order of more perfect truths ? The utmost certainty which results from reasoning is, after all, less absolute than the certainty of intuition and consciousness.

And, further, what may we suppose to have been the perfect reason of man before he fell ? Must we not believe that both the objects of knowledge were certain, and the powers of intellectual sight were clear ; that what we laboriously attain by argument, was seen by intuition ; that cause and consequence, principle and effect, were both alike directly perceived ? And what, then, is the source of uncertainty and doubt, of contingency and false conclusions, but the entrance of sin into the world, which has troubled the reason of mankind by passions, and darkened our hearts with impetuous emotions ? The source of falsehood is in our moral nature. Clear and unchangeable as the revelations of truth have stood from the beginning, it is our sin,—the medium through which they must needs force their way,—that has made even the most steadfast lights to seem tremulous and doubtful. What do investigation, hypothesis, argument, evidences prove,

but this, that truth is hidden ; that we are walking by half-truths, conjectures, and probability? an inevitable lot to fallen man, and full of wholesome discipline, permitted for our trial and for the proving of our hearts ; yet nothing surely to be proud of, nothing to glory in. The prerogative of being doubtful has nothing in it either high or noble. The privilege of looking uncertainly from truth to falsehood, and from falsehood to truth, is nothing to boast of. The necessity of taking the least improbability as the surest attainable conclusion, is no property of a perfect intelligence. Our highest logic is but a struggle with the imperfections of our own faculties. And that this must be so, we may learn not only from what the reason of man once was, but from what it still shall be when we shall be *ἰσάγγελοι*, “as the angels of God.” What shall be then our knowledge when the conditions of this imperfect state are no more? Now we “know in part, and we prophesy in part,”—that is, we reason, doubt, discourse,—“but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.” We shall know by insight, intuition, and consciousness of the very presence of truth itself. And what is this passive reception of the reason but Divine faith ; the surest knowledge in a fallen state ; the most perfect way of knowing even in a perfect world?

2. And this leads to another conclusion, namely, that the deepest insights into Divine truth are obtained not by controversy, but by contemplation.

By contemplation I mean the act of the reason, consciously and of our own will, with faith and love, dwelling upon truth received by the gift of God; and by controversy, the activity of the intellect, either seeking truth by collision and counter-reasonings, or proving and evincing what it has already received. Controversies, in which both sides are seeking for their conclusions, and both alike are uncertain and conflicting, may enlighten the disputants, but can confer no boon on those who have already received the doctrines of faith. Such, in fact, have been the controversies of the Gentile schools, external to the precinct of the Church, before Christ's coming and since.

But it is no less true of the controversies which have been forced upon the Church itself. For what are they but defences of the truth as it is already apprehended in the mind of the Church? The Councils of the fourth and fifth ages did but affirm and illustrate the faith of the first. The Catholic Creeds, precious as they are as expositions of truth, added nothing to the "good and perfect gift." They did but express it. All that they contain is derived from it. Whatever

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may have been gained by the early defences of truth, in logical and verbal exactness, was rather a gain to the expression than to the conception of the faith. They did not bring out things which lay dormant and unperceived, as some strangely argue, into the inward view of the Church, but only express outwardly what had been held from the beginning.

Again, controversies can but inadequately exhibit those inward perceptions; for all controversy must be limited to the conditions of logic and speech, of thoughts and terms; and these have no sufficient capacity to receive the fulness of truth as it is seen by contemplation. And it is this that stamps with such inestimable worth the creeds and definitions, the very words and forms, which the Church has approved and used in propounding the faith. The right use of language in Divine things is a high gift, and presupposes much spiritual discernment of truth; for language can but approximate and shadow forth, as it were, by symbols and characters, (the most perfect indeed that we possess, yet still inadequate,) the ideas and relations of Divine truth; as, for instance, the unity of the uncreated God, the eternal generation of the Son, the procession of the Holy Ghost. These, when expressed in controversy, do not give back any clearer insight to



the enlightened intellect. Are they not among the things “which it is not lawful for a man to utter?” What can words or propositions reflect back upon the regenerate reason which devoutly adores the mystery of the Holy Trinity? In truth, it is not controversy that has aided contemplation, but contemplation that has sustained and perfected all true controversy. It is out of the contemplative life of the Church that the verbal and logical expression of truth has been derived. Controversies are but the efforts of her lower and less perfect faculties; exercises of those gifts which are addressed not to the apprehension of truth, but to the instruction of mankind. And they are those chiefly of the intellect alone, separable and distinct from the grace of sanctity. Though the greatest contemplatists and saints have been the first and greatest defenders of the faith—witness St. Athanasius, St. Austin, St. Anselm, among a multitude—yet the mental gifts employed in controversy may be possessed by unholy men; and the knowledge which results from controversy is no more than may be apprehended by the intellect. It may become a sort of intellectual or literary tradition, as regards the spiritual life, superficial and inactive. And this explains how men of a low tone of personal religion have been able controversial writers; partly because the faculties of contro-

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versy lie within their reach, and partly because the terms and definitions of truth have been supplied to them by men who have inwardly partaken the contemplative life, *i. e.* the faith and love, of the Church: so that in reality, through the conflicts of eighteen hundred years, they have most effectively maintained the truth who have intensely apprehended it in devotion of heart.

The true account of the matter then would seem to be, that the controversies of the Church are not by way of investigation but of exposition, and therefore, so far from bringing accesses of light, are themselves the results and not the cause of knowledge. And for want of a clear acknowledgment of this great fact, the endeavour to reduce objects of faith to definitions and proofs has become, to many, a source of infinite danger. We may see this in the schools and sects constituted upon the principle of inquiry and reasoning. They have perpetually entangled themselves in verbal arguments, and produced heresies by subjecting to the imperfection of language, and the rules of logical inference, mysteries which can only be received by the passive apprehension of the reason; as, for instance, the heretical use of the words "Son of God:" and of the terms *προβολή* and *ἀπόρροια*, as describing the eternal generation of

the Son; or again, the Sacramentarian errors; and the like. These perplexities are the natural result of their first principle, and the perpetual tendency of it is to exhaust and forfeit what truth is still possessed. When language and dialectics, which are vehicles of a mechanical kind, are abused as sources of proof, truth escapes by a perpetual waste; witness the Arian, Eutychian, and Socinian heresies, and the modern Christian sects which have developed themselves into rationalism, rejection of the Canon of Holy Scripture, and in the end, of Christianity itself. Controversy, then, in the hands of the Church has relation not so much to herself as to her antagonists. The very weapons by which she overcomes, she uses sparingly and almost against her will. Though both necessary and good, they are, yet, all too earthly and limited to give full utterance to the life and perception of faith. The contemplation of truth is so nearly allied to worship, that they continually blend. In meditating upon it, the Church adores the presence of her Lord; and from it she gains insights into the Divine will, mind, wisdom, and love, which issue not in definition and speech, but in affections and emotions; they can find no vent in figures and arguments, but in silence and sanctity, in love, obedience, adoration. This is the scientific and true use of reason, the enlightened

rationalism, which later days have inverted and profaned, by which things first believed are afterwards apprehended, first loved are afterwards understood. It is by this devout reflection of the mind on the objects of faith, that the reason pierces into the causes and relation of truth, and finds the perfect harmony of its own light with the lights of nature and of faith<sup>1</sup>.

3. And from this it follows again, that the most direct and effective discipline of the reason is a holy life. That there is some real and close connection between the intellectual and the spiritual powers we all acknowledge. Holy Scripture expressly declares it; and the evidence of fact plainly confirms the same. The illumination possessed by those who live purely, and the darkness of sensual and inflated minds, alike convince us that there is, and must be, some law by which the intellectual powers of those that live in humility and prayer are elevated above their natural range. And yet, with all this general certainty, we are often perplexed by apparent anomalies and contradictions. We see men of unholy lives exhibiting great intellectual powers, and doing service even in the defence of Divine truth; and again, men of the holiest lives slow and weak in their reasoning faculties. Moreover, we are unable exactly to say how it is, that a

<sup>1</sup> S. Thom. Aquin., contra Gentes, lib. i. c. vii.



holy life acts upon the intellectual nature ; and what are the gifts which are thereby conferred upon it, that is, whether they are superadded lights, or only its latent or virtual powers developed and extended. Perhaps every one has been tempted, after using the strongest expressions of belief in this law of grace, to explain away what he has said, until it is reduced almost to nothing ; and no alternative seems left to us but to choose between admitting that all we mean may be explained by the natural conditions of our intellectual faculties, or continuing to use high professions of belief in a supernatural enlightenment which we cannot verify by facts.

It must be said, then, first of all, that even though we were unable to attain to any clear view of the mysterious conditions on which it pleases God to distribute the measures of intellectual light, it would be no argument against the reality of that distribution, nor against the belief that such gifts are conferred by a law of spiritual discipline and probation. For we are equally unable to say how the operations of the Spirit unfold and strengthen the other affections and powers of our nature ; and yet no one therefore doubts the reality of our sanctification. There are, however, certain manifest facts which give us some further insight into the matter.

It is evident that the most powerful intellects of those who live either in sin or spiritual sloth, are mysteriously limited in their perceptions of truth. After all their toil and labour spent upon the matter of Divine Revelation, they appear to get no further than the external tradition of language and definitions. They seem to dwell in the outer court of Divine knowledge : in the logical and controversial region : in the restless exercise of the active intellect : the superficial and verbal exposition of the mysteries which shroud from them the realities of the Divine Presence. Even in the study of Holy Scripture, with the acutest critical knowledge of the text, they seem to have little or no realization of the sense. The characters which are traced upon the veil they read with a perfect skill, but the ideas which are behind it they seem not so much as to apprehend. It appears as if the faculties which are related to the objects of contemplation were wanting ; or, if we may so say, as if, with a perfect state of the organs of sight, the original power of perception were limited. On the other hand, the slowest and most unapt among devout and pure minds, although they be wanting in the logical and communicative powers, shew by their moral energies, by the realities of patience, reverence, obedience, love, inflexibility, wisdom of

life, such an inward realization and intuition of truth, as would probably be beyond the power of speech fully to express. They seem to possess that which St. Paul, even after three years of unwearied teaching, had it not in his power to confer upon the Church of Ephesus, which he still sought for them by the direct gift of the Father of lights, that they might "be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge<sup>m</sup>."

It is impossible to look at the history of the Christian Church and to doubt of this. What enlightenment of the inward sight, what intense perception of the Divine power, what ineffable knowledge of the mystery of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, what infinite fellowship and communion with the Holy Trinity of love, wisdom, and power, have there been in all ages since the Word was made flesh: even in the darkest days, when for a time the impure possessed the earth, and heresy usurped the altars of the Church. What things which it is not given to us to utter, have been realized and tasted by the poor and unlettered of Christ's members. The Baptismal Confession, devoutly pondered on, has been to the great multitude of all ages a fountain of all truth; and the grace of regenera-

<sup>m</sup> Eph. iii. 18, 19.

tion a source of perpetual light. Meditation on the Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist, has been a discipline of reason above that of scholastic studies ; and devout Communion an entrance into the very realities of truth. And is it not so at this hour ? Are not the millions of Christendom in the same condition still ? Do we not see every day, among our brethren in Christ, that those in whom the intellectual powers lie dormant, and their activity suspended, possess such gifts of wisdom and knowledge, such ripe and fruitful apprehensions of Divine truth, as the most cultivated intellect can obtain by no properties of its own ? Nobody can watch over the minds of unlearned Christians without perceiving, in "holy and humble men of heart" a proverbial wisdom, a sort of axiomatic knowledge of truth, an originality of thought, a refinement and delicacy of discrimination, a creativeness nearly akin to the highest acts of imagination and reason, which can be sufficiently accounted for by no external teaching, no acquisition from the oral suggestions of other men. Even those that cannot read the letters of Holy Scripture are found to overflow with an inward light ; as if, with organs of sight the most defective, or even dark, their inward powers of spiritual perception, like the gifted vision of the sightless, had no horizon ;—as



if they were released from the conditions of imperfect vision. And what is this after all but the power of regeneration, the light which is potentially in the grace of the new birth, drawn forth by the obedience of a devout and docile heart, shining inwardly upon a reverent and humble spirit?

Now, what is thus true of the most uncultivated minds must be equally true of all. That which is able to make them wise, despite of every intellectual hindrance, will doubtless work, with a greater and more searching virtue, for the illumination of those that are gifted both with intellectual powers and with the discipline of instruction. If depth, penetration, discernment, be conferred by a holy life upon untutored minds, how much more upon those, who with equal devotion have greater intellectual gifts.

From all this then it would seem to follow, that by the ordinary condition of our sanctification, the Spirit of God helps, as our other affections and powers, so also our intellectual faculties; that the cleansing of our moral habits is a direct means of increasing our inward light, by perfecting the clearness of the powers by which the objects of truth are to be seen; that through the same discipline, by which our moral habits are chastened into repentance, self-control, and

obedience to the law of righteousness, our intellectual faculties are also concentrated and strengthened in the contemplation of truth; and, lastly, that we cannot say what further intellectual powers may be developed out of the reason thus enlightened; what gifts of quick and keen discrimination, of direct and intuitive insight, may be conferred, through grace, upon the holy heart. This we know from the words of Inspiration; "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them because they are *spiritually discerned*. But he that is spiritual *judgeth all things*: yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the *mind of Christ*."<sup>n</sup>

Surely, brethren, it concerns us of all men to ponder these things. We are called to serve God in the paths of an intellectual life; and to glorify Him by the sanctification of our reasonable powers. We walk in an awful nearness to the light of truth, and on the very verge of heights which make the unsanctified intellect to turn. We need a discipline of personal holiness, lest our very gifts of light should cast us down.

1. Let us then remember that habits of study, without habits of devotion, will at best develope

<sup>n</sup> 1 Cor. ii. 14—16.

only the lower faculties of our intellectual nature : and that such a life will lay us open to great danger of false opinions, as well as of serious moral declension. The powers of the mind that are chiefly called into play by a life of study, are apprehension of terms and definitions, judgment, memory, and the like. Now no enlargement of the capacity or retentiveness of the memory, no sharpening of the critical sense of agreement or disagreement between logical terms, no perception of the functions and relations of numbers, and of mathematical truths, will supply the place of those higher powers and capacities which are related to the objects of worship and contemplation. These may be almost extinct in the acutest reasoner, in the most apt and ready scholar. There is nothing so dry and feeble as a mere literary mind, nothing more out of sympathy with all that is high, deep, living, energetic in truth. Intellectual activity is in itself a great distraction from prayer, meditation, and the silence of the inward life. The most devout are the most emphatic in saying so. Many books need many devotions, for much reading with the outward eye blinds the conscience and the heart. To be early and late at studies, unsanctified by prayer and frequent communion with Christ in the Holy Eucharist, dries the

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springs of deeper emotions, and keeps up a feverish pulse, a perpetual excitement which must be allayed and put down before the higher and calmer movements of the spiritual nature can find range and a season to begin their course. This seems to be the reason why, even in those that are blameless and pure in their moral habits, and of a sensitive regularity in the remoter duties of a Christian life, there are often great and obstinate spiritual faults. A religion which is speculative rather than contemplative is seldom fervent. For the most part, there is something strangely frigid and unreal about it. And a familiarity with theological terms, learned by study rather than realized by devotion, has a perilous tendency to two things that most of all stifle the very life of faith, I mean, to irreverence and to disputation. When the mind is partially and unequally excited, so that the intellectual habits are strengthened, while the passive habits by which devotion is nourished and sustained become stagnant and senseless, there is exceeding danger of that most subtle form of practical atheism, which consists in a clear acknowledgment of Divine mysteries in combination with a cold, and loveless temper of heart. It is not without a Divine counsel and deep intimation of truth, that they who in the heavenly presence



stand nearest to the Father of lights, are the Spirits of knowledge and of love; that cherubim are united as counter-parts with seraphim in the ministries of heaven. Surely it is to teach us that there is no true light but that which is combined with love; and to warn us how we put them asunder even so much as in thought. Truth held without love is but a weak belief, and will give way not only before the subtilties of disputants, but under the perplexities of our own secret doubts.

But error of opinion is not the chief danger of a life of mere study. The propositions of the intellect are a shifting foundation for our obedience to rest on. The will that has no better supports than the conclusions of reasoning, will not stand long against the assaults of passion and of the world. A faith which dwells only in the logical understanding, is soon beaten down when temptations set upon it, "when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall." And a life which stimulates the imagination, and introduces the mind to the knowledge of things which can be safely read only with pure eyes, and understood by clean hearts, has dangers peculiar to itself. It is not uncommon to find men of high intellects enslaved to habits of secret vice. And fearful is the wreck they make of themselves at

last. Perhaps the most awful sight is that of a man gifted with powerful intellect, but defiled by pride or lust. The higher the powers of the intelligence, the more nearly he is akin to an unclean spirit. And fearful is the judgment for which he prepares himself. The sin that is in him bribes his intellect against the conclusions of truth, warps his judgment, and teaches it subtleties and shifts to escape the inevitable condemnation of its own clear voice. It is impossible to say what incursions of temptation are permitted to invade such a mind; what doubts and contradictions may be sedulously ministered to it by the spirit of falsehood; what delusions such a man may palm upon himself; and, as the Spirit of grace is withdrawn, how even the highest principles of righteousness and truth may become clouded and uncertain; in the end, what corruption may spread over the particular affections, what settled perversion through the will itself. To such men the light of nature is darkness, the traditions of the Christian world a delusion, the doctrines of Christianity provocations to impious thoughts. We do not know what capacities of spiritual wickedness may lie within us. Who can say that the very gift of regeneration may not confer on us a susceptibility of such forms of intense evil as our unregenerate nature

could never exhibit? Who can say what a height of impiety there may be not only in the atheism and infidelity of regenerate men, but also in their sceptical and irreverent disputations; and how infinitely near they may come to that last judgment on the perverse and incredulous heart, "because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved," "for this cause God shall send them strong delusions that they should believe a lie<sup>o</sup>."

Let us, therefore, with all our strength, endeavour to draw forth the powers and gifts which are in our regeneration. This is the great practical truth enforced upon us by the Church to-day. God has revealed Himself to us in mystery that we may approach Him with awe. He has bidden us to know Him by self-abasement, worship, holiness. Let these be our chief aim; and all gifts of wisdom and knowledge, all faculties of the reason needful here in this world shall be added unto us.

2. And, lastly, let us remember that it is through the higher powers of our spiritual and reasonable nature, that we are related to the state of bliss hereafter. What employment there shall be in that everlasting rest, it is not for us too curiously to inquire. But it would seem, that there where the Truth itself shall be unveiled, and the

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spiritual nature shall be perfect in the clearness of its vision, there will be no more exercise for those faculties which are now employed upon uncertainties and doubtful investigation. In that kingdom of light, where there is no more toil and weariness; where the fever and the stir of this restless state shall all be over; there shall be no more clouds of doubt or probability, of chance or contingent future. There we "shall know even as we are known;" not by reflected lights, but by direct intuition. And where shall then be that world of systems and deductions, of opinions and theories, which our inferior powers have here created for themselves? Are they not all of time and of this world; born of the confusion and turbulence of our earthly life, and by the imperfect acts of our imperfect reason? When all these are passed away, what shall survive but the energies of soul which have here been unfolded by holiness unto love, worship, adoration; those powers which are universal in man, the matter of our common probation. "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth<sup>p</sup>." This shall be the work of saints, in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Eternal. Our highest



employment here shall be our only employment there; that work which is the work of all the regenerate servants of God; not only of the wise, learned, intellectual and refined, but of the whole mystical body, of every redeemed spirit of man. All our artificial inequalities shall then be past. There shall be no more the rude and the enlightened, the teacher and the learner, where all "shall see God." Here we are differenced from our fellow-heirs of the kingdom by superficial accidents; there we shall be united in that which in common we possess as men, and have together inherited as saints. Our reward shall then be measured by the law of our probation and the unfolded capacity of those spiritual gifts which are alike in all. The poorest and the least of Christ's saints shall then pierce into the very life of truth with an intuition keener than the sharpness of the intellect; for there we shall see by love. Doubtless, of all who attain that bliss, they will, with the fullest measure, enjoy the fruition of the Heavenly presence, who have here sought it with the most fervent devotion, and embraced it with the largest heart. It will be a day of reversing many an unequal lot, when Christ shall distribute the rewards of His kingdom, not according to our thoughts and judgments, but according to the spiritual and universal condition

by which He has proved His own elect. “Many that are first shall be last, and the last first.” Wherefore He hath said:—“I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight<sup>q</sup>.”

<sup>q</sup> St. Matt. xi. 25, 26.

THE END.











